

Wednesday July 15 1998

Algeria D 9.50	Greenland D 220	Qatar CR 1.00
Andorra FF 10	Hong Kong HK\$ 25	Pakistan R 20
Angola AS 30	Hungary F 300	Poland Z 20
Argentina AR 10	Ireland IR 100	Portugal E 200
Australia AU 1.00	Israel NIS 18.00	Romania L 20
Austria S 13.50	Italy L 200	Russia R 20
Belgium BF 10	Japan Y 100	South Africa R 10
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Bhutan Nu 2.00	Latvia L 20	Sweden S 10
Bolivia B 10	Lithuania LT 200	Switzerland F 20
Brazil R 1.00	Malaysia M 1.00	Taiwan NT 20
Canada C 1.00	Malta M 0.50	Turkey TL 170.00
Czechia CZ 10	Mexico M 20	USA US\$ 1.00
Denmark DK 10	Netherlands G 2.25	
Egypt E 10	Norway NOK 10	
Finland FM 10		
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The Guardian

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

G2 cover story

Can France learn to love foreigners?

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Style G2 pages 8-9

Biotechnology

Pride comes before a fall

Society, G2 pages 12-13

He's just spent £56bn and he's thinking of the next election



Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, outside the Treasury yesterday. His speech, in which he announced that health and education would share a cumulative £40 billion, delighted Labour MPs and stunned Conservatives. PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARQUES

Massive boost for health, education

Michael White, Larry Elliott and Mark Atkinson

THE Chancellor, Gordon Brown, yesterday mapped out Labour's strategy for winning a second full term in power when he unveiled a £56 billion increase in public expenditure on voter-friendly services like health and education over the next three years.

Mr Brown delighted Labour MPs and stunned the Conser-

vative benches as he trumped heavily-trailed predictions of a financial bonanza for schools, further education and hospitals with the announcement that health and education will share a cumulative £40 billion.

Although heavily dependent upon the economy avoiding a grinding recession over the next two years — and on continued public sector pay restraint — the bigger-than-expected boost to schools and hospitals will enable the Government to meet its 1997

manifesto commitments to Middle England by the time of the next election, 2001-2.

It was buttressed by £2.5 billion of extra cash aimed at a guaranteed minimum income for poor pensioners. They will also get help with winter fuel bills and transport costs; free eye tests for OAPs will also be restored.

In a further gesture to Labour's traditionalists, there will also be more money for run-down estates, the arts and overseas aid. But Mr Brown gave parallel assurances to the City — immediately contested by the Tories — that Labour is keeping a tight enough grip on tax-and-spend to avoid further damaging interest rate rises.

In headline terms it means that Frank Dobson's Department of Health will get a cumulative £21 billion extra by

the year 2001-2002 — an average 4.7 per cent real growth over three years, 3.7 per cent over the current Parliament compared with 3 per cent in 1992-97.

Tories and Liberal Democrats protested that Mr Brown's "double accounting" will really be an extra £8.6 billion a year by 2001-2, just enough to allow the NHS to "stand still".

David Blunkett's education and employment budget will rise by £19 billion as a result of the Treasury's year-long Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). Through twice the real-terms increase in the last Parliament — 3 per cent against 1.4 — it is back-ended, with most money, an extra £3.3 billion, coming in election year.

That gives Mr Blunkett an-

other tough year in 1999 and Mr Brown also announced another potential headache: a controversial pilot scheme which could see the replacement of child benefit for 16 to 18-year-olds with a means-tested grant tied to staying on at school.

In a sweeping overhaul which restructures Whitehall's current and capital spending, the CSR will see their budgets set for three years in return for tightly-monitored progress on efficiency and the delivery of "front-line services" in NHS wards and school classrooms.

"That is what we mean by education, education, education. Honouring our commitment to the British people," Mr Brown told the Commons in an echo of Tony Blair's pre-

election pledges, some of which have suffered from two years of deliberately tight public spending controls.

"This government has made the choices necessary to deliver stable and sustainable public finances. We have been steadfast in our priorities — the nation's priorities," said Mr Brown.

Debt repayment alone is saving the Government £5 billion a year in interest charges and further sales of public assets will raise £11 billion.

Transport, law and order, and local government — including housing — are among the winners. Social security spending will also continue to rise, albeit at a slower rate than under the Tories, 2.1 per cent against 3.8 per cent. Loser departments include

the legal aid budget, defence, agriculture, the Foreign Office, the Department of Trade and Industry (except its research budget) and Mr Brown's own department.

The Shadow Chancellor, Francis Maude, welcomed extra money for public services, but warned: "The Chancellor has confirmed today why Labour has already raised taxes 17 times, why families are already £1,000-a-year worse off — and it is because Labour cannot control public spending."

The Treasury is sticking by its forecast of 2 per cent growth this year. Ministers

are confident they can avoid letting the economic downturn become a recession. They insist they have been hyper-cautious, leaving projected surpluses on current spending of between £7 and £12 billion in each year in case of a downturn.

If unemployment rises, they will need it. Mr Brown is also gambling against a damaging public sector pay avalanche which would eat up extra cash.

Polly Toynbee and Jonathan Freedland, page 8; Leader comment, page 9; City Notebook, page 11

Spending Review highlights

Health spending to increase by a total £21 billion over three years. Next year it will rise by 5.7 per cent in real, inflation-adjusted, terms and by 4.5 per cent in 2000.

Education to receive an extra £19 billion over the next

three years, £9 billion next year, £5 billion in 2000 and £10 billion in 2001, a real-terms average increase of 5.5 per cent a year.

Transport boosted by £1.7 billion over the next three years to modernise the road

and rail network.

Science to get an extra £1.1 billion, including £400 million for the Wellcome Foundation, to provide more research and teaching.

Regeneration £2.4 billion to improve housing and housing, split between £2.5 billion on

renewing housing stock and £200 million on a New Deal for communities.

Museums, the arts and sport get £290 million extra over three years, a real increase of 5.5 per cent.

World Service Foreign Office support to rise by £44 million between now and

the end of the parliament.

Overseas aid to increase from the low of 0.25 per cent of national income to 0.3 per cent.

Pensioners' eye test charges to be abolished and more help with transport costs.

Debt interest payments to be £5 billion a year lower by the end of this parliament.

Efficiency targets

government departments to have targets from 3 to 10 per cent.

Pay Public sector pay review bodies forced to take account of departmental spending limits and the Government's inflation and efficiency targets.

In with the old, as the new is spun aside

Commentary

Hugo Young

THERE is oldness in New Labour after all. So obsessed have they become with denying this, and so fascinated are we in chronicling their high-spun empty novelty, that any possible consistency with their past gets written out of the script. Yet Gordon Brown's statement yesterday defined a government which is in one respect crucially

linked to Labour history. Though coming after two years spent avowedly mimicking the Tories, it was a statement no Conservative could have made. It sprang from a joyful belief in public spending. You could see as much in every breathless, driven word of Mr Brown's sell-mail speech. The party that fought the election behind zero spending promises, and silenced every spokesman who seemed likely to break ranks, presents itself as a big spender only after 14 months in power: a bizarre reversal of political normality.

But there was nothing apologetic about it. Whereas even a liberal Tory like Kenneth Clarke never avoided a sense of shame about every tax-pound he spent, Mr Brown revelled in what it would, under new management, accomplish. He believed with obvious passion in every word he said about the huge improvements in the public weal he was setting forth: the "infrastructure of opportunity" the state was building, the giant escalators on education and health spending, compared with what the Tories did, which he sternly refused to mention in April 1997.

The famous three-year plan isn't as new as the Chancellor made out. The memoirs of Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson are rich in accounts of their own three-year time-

frames to bring logic to public spending, though they never got round the need for annual reviews. The Brown statement hasn't been without its own heavy pre-planning, in which unique long-termism

was proposed as one of its defining features. But in truth, the CSR — comprehensive spending review — is better seen as one of the imposing lines of efforts to impose value-for-money disciplines on the public purse. It demands departmental "contracts" with the Treasury, and emphasises "co-ordinated approaches", not to mention incessant reviews of reviews of reviews. What is being tested, at bottom, is whether a government that believes in public spending can get better value for money than one that did not.

The turn on that will remain out for several years. But, in the run-up, ministers differed in their approach to settling priorities. Before the PX committee, which heard the initial demands, the star

performer was Clare Short, the only minister, I was told, who came with a clear plan for reordering her departmental budget. Margaret Beckett and Jack Straw, apparently, also got the idea, but many others, when asked what they expected their budgets to look like in three years' time, replied with bleary bewilderment.

The experience also ended by not being notably collective. The Brown approach removed the Cabinet from the equation other than as individual supplicants in bilateral meetings. All power, at the finish, resided with him and the Prime Minister. Whereas even the Thatcher cabinets engaged in some memorable set-piece rows over public spending, the Blair-Brown duet here de-

cided everything — evidence of the two men's strongly collaborative dimension, as well as Mr Blair's own capacity to pay attention sometimes to the smallest details.

The CSR, however, is not a piece of magic. It disposes of some canards, and displaces the froth of the last two weeks. We're faced at last with an agenda, not a message. This is what these ministers went into government to do, and the promises of high seriousness will please Labour MPs and unite the party. Yet it's the moment, also, of truth: when a government discovers that, however vast its majority, its economic performance has almost nothing to do with its political strength.

Some of the threats to the turn to page 3, column 1

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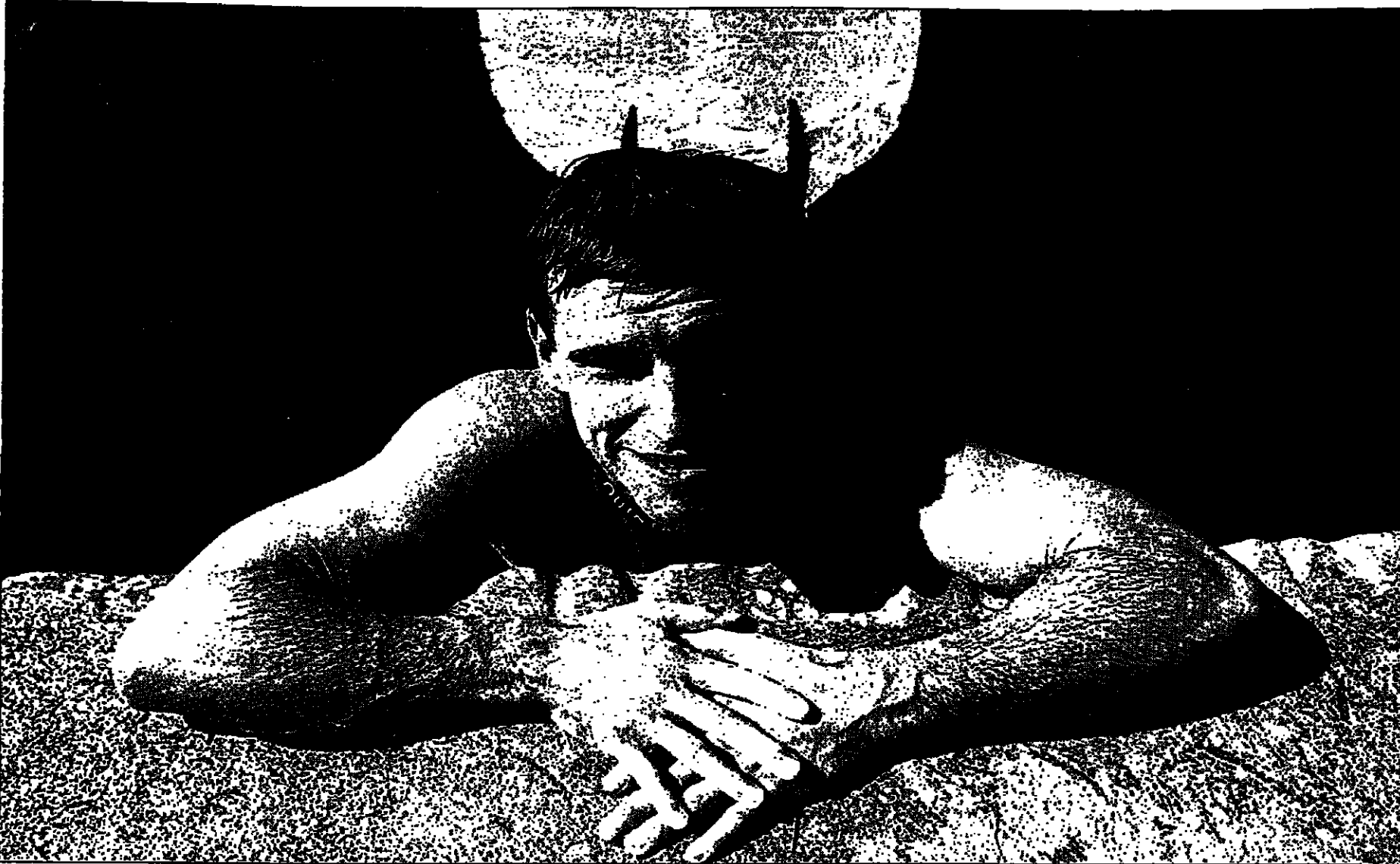
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Crossing the Atlantic



Making a splash... Atlantic swimmer Ben Lecomte during a break in training. 'People think I'm crazy, but I'm doing it for a good cause'

PHOTOGRAPH BY HALAM

His brothers are stars at marathons and water-skiing. He aims to swim the ocean

The swimmer

John Duncan
Sports Correspondent

FOLLOWING a long line of eccentric French adventurers, Ben Marie Jean-Paul Lecomte will today pull on a wetsuit and flippers at Cape Cod, Massachusetts, slip into the chilly waters and set off on a 3,956-mile quest to become the first person to swim the Atlantic.

Mr Lecomte, who intends to swim six hours each day in two-hour bursts, is due to arrive in Brest, France, in late September, and hopes to lay himself off and hand a cheque for several thousand pounds to the Association for International Cancer Research, based in St Andrew's, Fife.

"People think I'm crazy," he said. "But I'm doing it for a good cause." He decided to take on the Atlantic as a tribute to his father, who died of

colon cancer seven years ago, aged 49. The AICR is the only cancer charity which sponsors research internationally.

"I've been doing different types of sports all my life from an early age," said Mr Lecomte, whose brothers are a marathon runner and a champion water skier. "I've had the idea of crossing the Atlantic for about eight years. I like the adventure of it."

He will be followed by a small boat with a raft which will be detached and pushed over to him when he wants to sleep under a waterproof plastic sheet. His main problems will not be the actual swimming but the psychological pressure of loneliness, and the danger of sharks.

Instead of swimming inside a metal cage, he will be protected by a device which emits an electronic signal that deters predators. The last man to paddle across the Atlantic, Guy Delage, had to repel a shark by kicking it on the nose. "No, I'm not afraid

of them," Mr Lecomte said. "In a cage I could be crushed against it if a big wave comes along."

Boredom and mental exhaustion will be eased by Mr Lecomte's photographic memory. "You have to focus on the goal, on the whole event," he said. "I have vivid pictures in my mind of the good times, of my family and friends."

In all the preparations Mr Lecomte, who moved to Austin, Texas, from France five years ago, has been advised by Professor Eddie Coyle, the director of the human performance laboratory at the University of Texas. "What he's attempting is physiologically possible," he said.

His feat is likely to be dismissed by those who keep the records of long distance swimming, because of the snorkel, wet-suits and aquatic dynamic fin he will be wearing to assist him. Mr Lecomte said: "I am not the best swimmer. But it's something I have to do."

Just for the record...

□ The first man to do it on foot was Frenchman Remy Bricka, aged 39, who skied on two 15ft polyester floats. He arrived in Trinidad suffering delirium after leaving the Canary Islands 64 days earlier on April 1, 1988.

□ The first crossing on a raft was by France's Guy Delage in February 1995. He took 55 days. Delage was also the first to cross the ocean in a microlight aircraft, in 1991.

□ Another Frenchman, marine biologist Alain Bombard, in 1962 was the first to cross the Atlantic in a rubber dingy. He later became the French environment minister.

□ Seventy-six people have rowed the Atlantic, 11 of them in one French boat.

The first solo-rower was a Briton, John Fairfax in January 1969.

□ Charles Lindbergh flew the Atlantic solo in the Spirit of St Louis for the first time in 1927, collecting a \$25,000 prize for landing in Paris.

□ Elizabeth Hoff will try to become the first British woman to row the Atlantic on new year's day 2000.

□ The Blue Riband for the fastest sea crossing was won by the Queen Mary in

1936, but is held historically by the liner United States, which completed her maiden voyage in July 1952 in three days 10 hours 40 minutes, still the fastest conventional passenger ship record.

Richard Branson's powerboat, Virgin Atlantic Challenger II, made the trip in three days, eight hours and 31 minutes in 1987, but the official record is now held by Italy, whose Desiro in 1992 crossed the Atlantic non-stop in two days 10 hours and 34 minutes.

US troops will quit, allies warned

John Hooper in Rome

THE American government has secretly threatened to pull its troops out of Europe in an attempt to curb the reach of a proposed permanent war crimes tribunal.

The threat highlights the rift opening between Washington and some of its staunchest allies over the creation of the court.

Washington's representative has already told the Rome conference which plans to set up the new body that the US will "actively oppose" it if it is given powers that governments like Britain and Germany agree it should have.

Last night, these and other serious divisions were cast in a shadow over the prospects for a deal before the conference ends on Friday. One delegate called the atmosphere "poisoned".

Human rights activists see the creation of an International Criminal Court (ICC) as potentially a giant step forward for global human rights. The tribunal would be empowered to judge accusations of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, such as torture, enslavement and the persecution of minorities. Until now, only four ad hoc courts have been set up to hear such cases — at Nuremberg and Tokyo after the second world war and, more recently, at Arusha and The Hague to judge war crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

The US fears the court could be used to bring politically motivated prosecutions against its troops abroad. It has mounted a vigorous campaign to try to scotch provisions that would allow the trial of US citizens, even if Washington failed to ratify the treaty creating it.

The rawness of America's strong-arm tactics is revealed in a fax sent to the German defence ministry in Bonn last Thursday, apparently in preparation for a telephone discussion between the US defence secretary, William Cohen, and his counterpart in Bonn, Volker Rühe.

The fax says: "Even under the most optimistic scenario it will be a long time before the US is a party to the ICC statute. Our troops are deployed worldwide in support of international peace and security — including a substantial and active presence in Europe — and would become a magnet for frivolous and politically-motivated accusations."

"Should the universal jurisdiction proposal be adopted by the Rome conference, we would have to consider the implications for our overseas presence, including our commitment to forces in Europe."

A US spokesman said last night: "The US does not comment on bilateral negotiations in the context of a multilateral discussion. We view these private negotiations as a normal and essential part of any such discussion."

Germany was responsible for the most far-reaching of three proposals set before the conference, each of which would allow prosecutions without agreement from the accused's government. Last Bonn's plan was ruled out by the conference chairman, Philippe Kirsch of Canada, on the day after the Pentagon's fax was sent.

A more restrictive suggestion, tabled by Britain, failed to attract widespread support. But a third formula, devised by South Korea, won the backing of a clear majority of delegates.

According to a source close to the conference, similar tactics have been used by the Pentagon on Seoul. Mr Cohen met the South Korean defence minister, Chun Yong-taek, in Washington last week.

On Monday, Seoul's representative tried to convince the Rome conference that his government's proposal did not constitute "universal jurisdiction" — the phrase which, perhaps significantly, was complained of in the Pentagon's fax. But his delegation has not scrapped its formula, which now looks set to be adopted by the conference.

Giant venture for 29 lb aircraft

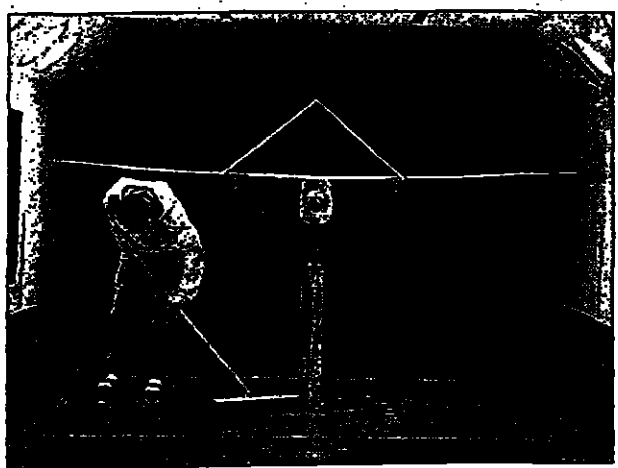
The model plane

Martin Kettle in Washington

OVER the years, the Atlantic Ocean has been crossed by everything from Viking longships to Concorde, and by adventurers from Christopher Columbus to Richard Branson. Indeed, it is hard to imagine there are any untried routes or methods of crossing left.

But in the next few weeks a group of engineers and meteorologists from Washington state in the north-western United States intend to be the first to pilot a small model plane across the Atlantic, roughly retracing the route pioneered by the first manned flight nearly 80 years ago.

The Aerosonde, which costs \$15,000 to build, looks like a slightly bigger version of the model planes enthusiasts fly in parks. About 5ft long, it has a high wing span and weighs 29lb, including 11lb of fuel. If the calculations are right, it will take off from Newfoundland early in August and land near a golf course in the west



Aerosonde, retracing pioneer flight

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE FINEMAN

of Ireland 30 hours later. "It's Spirit of St Louis stuff," said Cliff Mass of the University of Washington, in Seattle, referring to the plane in which Charles Lindbergh made the first solo Atlantic flight in 1927.

Prof Mass and an engineering team from the Washington-based Insitu Group have calculated that there will be

an opportunity for the attempt in August, when gales are less likely and favourable tail winds will be at their best.

Three Aerosondes will be taken to Bell Island, near St John's in Newfoundland, from where two will be launched to fly north on a great circle route. If they make it, they will land at Bell

Island, County Mayo, 1,900 miles away. The third will be launched if the others fail.

The flight path will almost exactly retrace the route taken by John Alcock and Arthur Brown in a Vickers Vimy in June 1919.

Three engineers will supervise the launch from Newfoundland, and two more will travel ahead to Ireland to land the planes. Insitu's president, Ted McGee, believes chances of success are "substantially better than 50 per cent".

The planes will fly at between 5,000 and 15,000 feet, depending on the weather, at an average speed of 50 knots. They will be out of radio contact for all but the first and last 60 miles, but will be guided by a computer-controlled autopilot and global positioning system. Apart from engine failure, the chief problem facing the engineers is the danger of icing.

The Aerosonde has been developed commercially as an unmanned collector of meteorological data. The plane is already in use on the Pacific coast of the United States and Canada, and by the Australian Bureau of Meteorology.

It's in with the old after two years, as the new is spun aside

continued from page 1 programme reflect political indecision. The vaunted promise to cut the welfare budget dramatically, as the main way of paying for the opportunity infrastructure, has yet to come anywhere near fulfilment. By far the largest gap in the agenda, and the one that featured least conspicuously in Brown's copious promises of imminent announcements to flesh out his figures, is welfare reform. The relevant cabinet committee is finding it far harder to agree on a coherent way forward than, in the halcyon honeymoon days, they once expected.

That, however, is post-honeymoon life. More ominously clouding this is the predictable public pay crisis, and the predictable economy. The CSR

rests heavily on a distinction between current and capital spending categories which don't sustain the vice and virtue they're supposed to be swathed in. In what sense is a new school more important than well-paid teachers to the national goal of better education? Not merely the public sector unions will ask that kind of question.

And then, if growth, inflation and unemployment turn seriously bad, which they might, education and health will not receive the boodles which the whole of yesterday's statement was dedicated to supplying. In the highest reaches of the government a recession is not expected. What they see at present is exaggerated pessimism, offsetting the exaggerated op-

timism of a year ago. They're unusually confident about class-sizes and waiting-lists, knowing that, if the economy does turn down, every other priority can be made to suffer to make sure they're kept. That would be a dismal outcome. But a version of it is quite likely. Asking for the opposite is expecting quite a lot. Events get in the way of the most careful plans, and these plans are, on the whole, a prudent mixture of caution and ambition.

They are the defining event of the Blair government in both a resonant and a salutary sense. They do proclaim the continuing existence of a project that might be called, after all, social democratic: a belief in the public good attainable by public means,

without any more nonsense about the minimal state, or flirtations with private health provision. They speak for a world which, in the basic services that citizens depend on, insists there is still such a thing as society.

On the other hand, the furtherance of this world doesn't come easily. The life of nations isn't pain-free assurance but a constant struggle. It isn't just a matter of attitude, convincingly though Mr Brown retrieved attitudes from the near-ruins of doctored blandness. It depends on money that may not be made, answers that may not be available, global tendencies that are mostly out of reach. As it always did, whether the majority was two or 200.

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WHICH?
THE INDEPENDENT CONSUMER GUIDE

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In G2 today: James Campbell on the enduring appeal of Anaïs Nin and her erotic tales

Why wunderkids are getting weird: Roy Greenhalgh • Can Labour deliver on its transport white paper promises? Study finds silicone gel safe but hits at private surgeons over hard-sell, and lack of qualifications and warnings, writes Sarah Boseley

Clinics attacked on breast implants



Typical cosmetic surgery adverts in a women's magazine

SILICONE gel breast implants were yesterday cleared of making women ill, but private clinics advertising such cosmetic surgery were lambasted for hard-sell techniques, unqualified surgeons and failure to tell women about the risks.

An Independent Review Group set up by the Government recommended that the 8,000 women a year seeking breast-enlarging surgery should receive full information and a checklist of topics to be raised by the surgeon before the operation. Baroness Jay, the Health Minister, accepted the recommendation.

"The quality and type of information provided to patients in the private sector varies considerably," said David Sturrock, Professor of Rheumatology at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, who chaired the group's inquiry. All advertisements for cosmetic breast operations which appear in the

back pages of many women's magazines will have to tell potential customers where they can get detailed information about potential risks and side-effects, from ruptured implants to scars and wrinkles. A cooling-off period of several days will allow the woman to change her mind, without losing money.

The private clinics are not subject to the controls that apply in the NHS. David Sharpe, President of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, said that some breast implant operations were done by doctors whose specialism was not plastic surgery — they could be gynaecologists or ear, nose and throat specialists.

The British Journal of Plastic Surgery recently recruited volunteers to contact 16 private clinics, asking for information about breast implants. "Many of the women who were in our study are still being pursued by the clinics a

year later," he said. The clinics obtained their phone numbers from directory inquiries and called trying to persuade them to have operations, offering discounts. "These are practices more attuned to double-glazing salesmen," said Professor Sharpe, director of Plastic Surgery at the University of Bradford. Private clinics were often staffed by "surgeons who may not have made the grade," he said. "Most consultants would rather be employed in the NHS than work at a cheap rate in a cowboy clinic. They will be given very small sums for doing the surgery."

A breast implant was not a

complicated operation and people not properly accredited were doing it. "A trained chin-sucker could put in a breast implant," he said. "I know of only one accredited surgeon in a cosmetic clinic." Women should contact the General Medical Council to find out whether their surgeon was on the specialist register. Professor Sharpe said women who wanted breast implants should see their GP, who could advise them where to go. But many women contacted private clinics because they did not want their GP to know.

On the main issue it was set up to address, the Independent Review Group found no

real dangers in silicone gel implants. Those women who feel they could not live without the operation, for cosmetic reasons, because of congenital defects, or mastectomy following cancer, should go ahead, said Professor Sturrock. "We want to reassure women contemplating having a breast implant that in terms of the major concerns, providing the risks and benefits are explained to them, they can make their own decision."

This is the third UK review in six years to find silicone gel implants are not harmful, but it has again failed to satisfy campaigners because of what has occurred in the US. The Food and Drug Administration has banned implants because the manufacturers, Dow Corning, have not proved they are safe.

The company has gone into bankruptcy and its parent, Dow Chemical, has offered billions of dollars to try to end

legal actions which have flooded in after the FDA ban. Campaigners say that 60,000 women in the UK have been damaged by silicone implants. They complain of ill-effects such as fatigue, headaches, muscle pains, memory loss and nausea. Some are unable to get out of bed.

The report says that silicone gel is not the cause of illness among some women. The group criticises "lack of scientific rigour" in some research used by American lawyers to boost compensation cases.

Margot Cameron, founder of the Silicone Support Group UK, said: "Hell will freeze over before women's groups accept the findings of six old men who don't have breasts. We wanted to be on the panel, but there were no women at all."

Two members of the panel were pro-silicone before the inquiry began, she said.

Satirist lays on the gags to say goodbye

Johnny Speight's own jokes helped friends throw off the funeral gloom

Annika Gentheman

JOHNNY Speight kept his friends laughing until the very end. The creator of the poisonous bigot Alf Garnett managed to snatch the last laugh even at his own funeral — by providing the jokes for the ceremony.

Veteran comedians yesterday joined his widow Connie and their three children to pay tribute to the scriptwriter who died of stomach cancer last week at the age of 78.

The sombre mood of the occasion quickly evaporated when Eric Sykes, who helped Speight to fame, suggested that anyone in the congregation who felt like being mournful should go home and watch TV. The rest of the service was decidedly upbeat. The vicar

said he had never laughed so much at a funeral.

Warren Mitchell — who for decades starred as Garnett, the Inconceivable East-End racist of Speight's most famous series, *Till Death Do Us Part*, and *In Sickness And In Health* — said he had taken advice from the writer on what he ought to say at the funeral.

"I spoke to Johnny just a couple of weeks ago... I said: 'I'm a bit worried, I'll probably have to speak. Could you write me something, since you always write my words?' He smiled and said: 'You know what Spike Milligan said recently? I only hope I don't die before Harry Secombe. I don't want him singing at my funeral'."

"He asked: 'What are you going to say?' I suggested I said he was the greatest political satirist since Jonathan Swift. He said: 'God no, don't say that. I don't want to be embarrassed at my own funeral.'"

Mitchell also addressed the still contentious question of whether Speight's controversial scripts ridiculed racism or pandered to

some viewers' prejudices. "Racism was a subject that often came up," Mitchell told the packed crematorium at Atherstone, Buckinghamshire. "Johnny was incapable of being a racist. His contempt was reserved for those ignorant louts who really did believe that their white skin — nasty pub pallor usually — made them superior to others."

William G Stewart, the quiz show host, said Speight, who sensed he had fallen out with the BBC establishment, had been "raging at the timidity and political correctness that threatened to endanger British broadcasting" only days before he died.

Friends, including Milligan, Lionel Bart, Denis Norden, Jean Boht, and Tony Booth, appeared moved. Booth, who played Alf Garnett's son-in-law in *Till Death Do Us Part*, and is now father-in-law to Tony Blair, said: "It would take pages to express what he meant to me. I loved him."

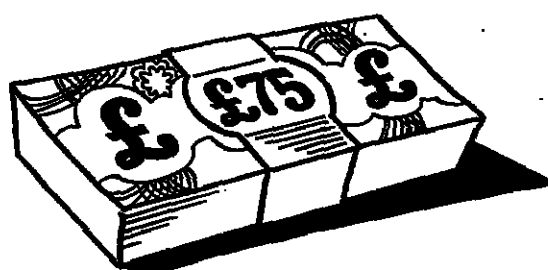
Milligan said: "Wherever you are, I hope you're happy. I'll miss you."



The actors Tony Booth (left) and Warren Mitchell among mourners at the funeral yesterday of Johnny Speight

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN GOWEN

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Hague all ears on 'listen' tour

Lucy Ward Political Correspondent

IT BEGAN yesterday in a Cool Britannia, white-walled loft in a town hall in Soho; it will end in town halls the length and breadth of Britain.

The Conservative Party apology tour, launched under the banner *Listening to Britain*, will show the eagerly listening Tories whether Britain is still listening to them.

To an audience of shadow ministers and party officials sporting "Listening to Britain" badges, their leader, William Hague, unveiled "the largest, most ambitious listening exercise" ever carried out by a British party.

The year-long campaign, which will see Tory front and backbenchers and activists attending 150 public meetings across the country, doubles as an act of contrition for past arrogance and a way of picking up on voters' concerns and priorities.

Mr Hague, striding through London's neo-industrial Imagination Gallery to the accompaniment of rave-style repetitive beats, said the exercise represented "a new type of political meeting, where people come along to speak out and politicians come along to listen to them."

People were "tired of being fed soap powder politics by politicians who think their time is always better spent in TV studios than in meeting the hungry for real political meetings where their voices can be heard."

Real political meetings, it emerged, will be held in town halls and attended by a cross-section of voters or by groups

of workers such as teachers or health service staff. A moderator chairs the event, while a Tory MP sits humbly in one corner, absorbing criticism and filing away views and ideas to feed back to Tory Central Office.

The party has tested the formula at three pilot events and is convinced it works. Asked whether voters really wanted to spend evenings in draughty town halls, Mr Hague cried: "They will enjoy it!" A group of health service workers he spoke to yesterday had enjoyed the meeting enormously.

The Conservatives insist that the tour is not an attempt to ask the public to make policy for the party, nor a signal that it is preparing to dump long-standing principles.

Deputy leader Peter Lilley said: "A car company developing its next model will consult its potential customers about transportation needs. But it won't ask them to design the engine or tell it the principles of engineering."

Though the tour findings will influence the party's next manifesto, the policy on the European single currency — ruled out for 10 years — will remain set in stone, Mr Hague made clear.

Contrasting the campaign with other parties' listening exercises, including "Labour Listens", the Tories said it was designed to reach a broad span of voters and would not be hijacked by special interest groups.

Though the series of meetings — 50 attended by MPs and 100 more organised by constituency associations — will last a year, Mr Hague plans to continue the exercise "indefinitely" if it proves successful.

Prison staff foil Nilsen memoir

Luke Harding

AN ATTEMPT by the jailed serial killer Dennis Nilsen to publish an autobiography has been thwarted by prison officers who monitored his mail.

Nilsen, who is serving life for the murder of up to 15 young men, was about to sign a £100,000 book deal when the contract was intercepted. The Prison Service confirmed yesterday.

His secret negotiations with publishers will inevitably reopen the row about criminals who profit from their crimes — a controversy begun in April when the *Guardian* revealed the author Gitta Sereny paid the child-killer, Mary Bell, for her co-operation on her book, *Cries Unheard*.

Nilsen's contract was believed to have guaranteed him about £100,000 for his 450-page memoir, which was expanded from material written in jail as part of a therapeutic exercise. The killer had earlier claimed in a letter to the press that profits from his book would go to charity.

The Prison Service is reported to be investigating how the manuscript, provisionally entitled *Nilsen: History of a Drowning Man*, was smuggled out of the top security Whitefriars prison in Cambridgeshire.

The manuscript is written in cold and detached prose, and describes how Nilsen murdered his victims.

A Prison Service spokesman said yesterday that there was a long-standing rule that serving inmates were not allowed to profit from or talk about their crimes. He added: "Prisoners are allowed to

make genuine representations about the justice system, but this was deemed to be a business activity, and thus in breach of regulations."

The letter was intercepted last week. The publisher has not been identified.

At the time of the Mary Bell affair, the Attorney General, John Morris QC, considered trying to retrieve the payment made by Gitta Sereny, but concluded there was no basis in law for such a move. Since their senior Home Office officials, at the request of the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, have been considering how to close the loophole which allows convicted killers to be paid by publishers but not newspapers.

One survivor of an attack by Nilsen, Carl Stottor, aged 51, has written to the Home Office demanding he should not profit by his book. "Whatever he makes will not compensate for the damage he has done."

In a letter to the Sunday Telegraph written six weeks ago, Nilsen denied asking for £100,000 and said it was "entirely untrue" to suggest he wanted any payment.

Nilsen, aged 51, a civil servant, lured young men to his homes in Cricklewood and Muswell Hill, north London. After strangling them he performed bizarre rituals on their bodies, which he later dismembered. He was sentenced to life in 1983.

In his book he blames his killings on a loveless childhood that left him with a craving to be looked after. He wanted their dead bodies for his fantasy. "I pretended it was me being cared for and at the same time I was also the carer looking after them."

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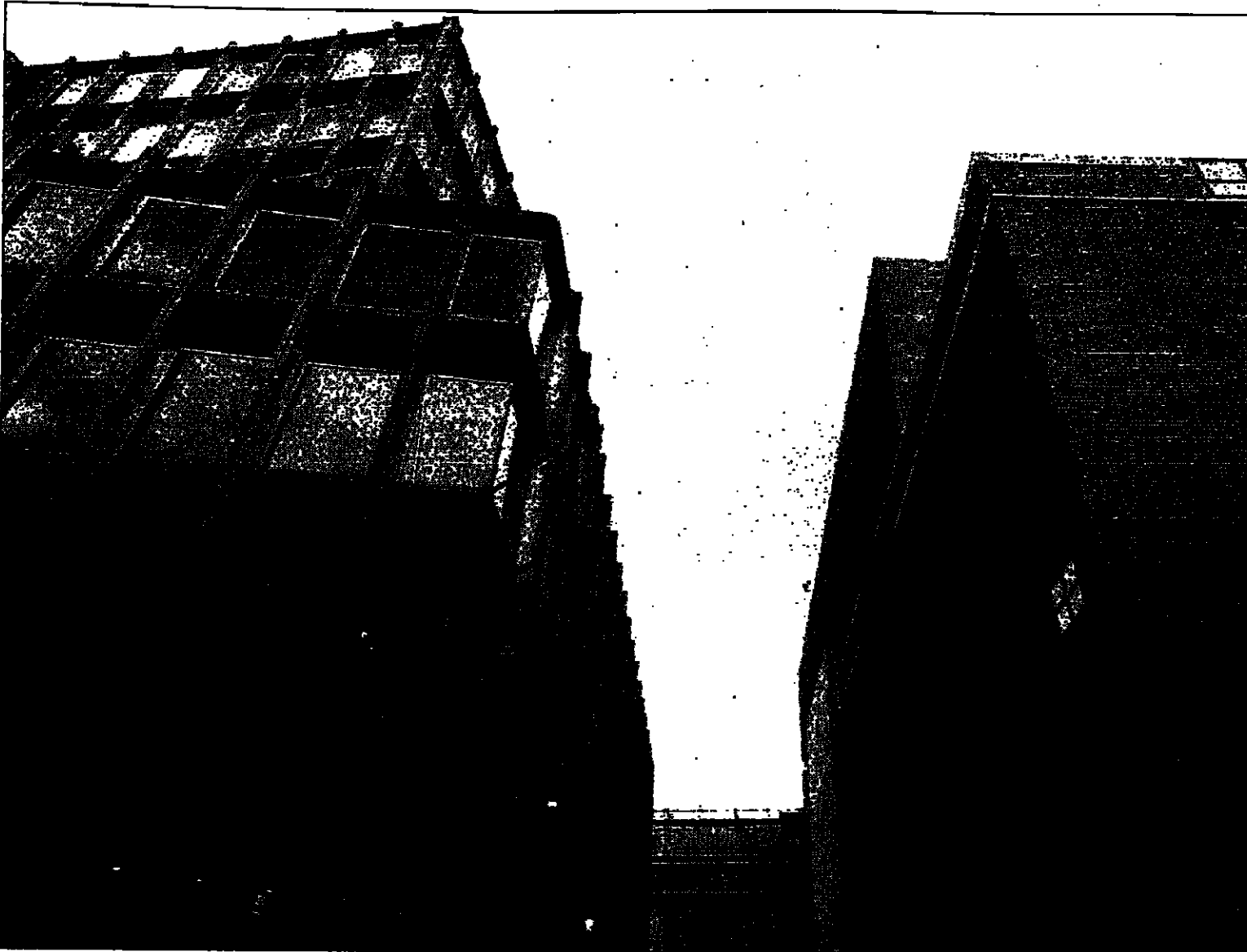
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St Vincent House (left), next to the National Gallery, has been bought for £17.5 million as an investment for the future

National Gallery buys hotel for future growth

Don Glatzer
Arts Correspondent

THE National Gallery yesterday unveiled ambitious plans to expand with the £17.5 million purchase of a large property at the rear of its existing site.

St Vincent House, which houses a hotel, was bought for the gallery by the NGF Foundation, a private charitable trust, with funds provided by

the American Friends of the Gallery. Initially the new building, situated behind the gallery's Sainsbury Wing, will provide office space for the gallery's staff. But when the hotel's lease runs out in 30 years' time, the building could be used as gallery space.

National Gallery chairman Philip Hughes described the investment as being "for the benefit of our successors". Speaking of future develop-

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER

CSA sums still wrong

Anne Perkins
Political Correspondent

THE Child Support Agency gets a quarter of estimates wrong, five years after it was created to settle maintenance for children of separated parents.

One senior MP, David Davis, Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, said the findings from the National Audit Office report presented to MPs yesterday were "intolerable and totally unacceptable".

Sir John Bourn, head of the NAO, said the agency's accuracy target had been cut, from 85 per cent to 75 per cent. "Errors are still being made. In addition, the agency's performance has left a legacy of error that continues to affect amounts being paid," he said, condemning "erroneous or unexplained adjustments" in the complex formula.

The NAO, the taxpayers' accountants, found that the CSA had £1 billion of maintenance arrears and £800 million was considered "uncollectable".

The Government two weeks ago announced a much simpler formula to calculate maintenance, based on proportions of the absent parent's income. But it will not be introduced for three years, to the frustration of the CSA's clients and MPs, who say that the agency accounts for a third of their mail.

David Davis, the Tory MP whose Public Accounts Committee last year demanded a higher accuracy target for the CSA, said last night that its management illustrated "a culture of complacency".

Last year we concluded that it was unacceptable that the agency worked to an accuracy target of only 85 per cent. We recommended the target be raised. Instead they have lowered it and now aim only

for 75 per cent." The CSA said that Sir John recognised the complexity of the legislation the agency had to implement, and that double the number of cases were being processed.

A four-year plan is being implemented, designed to ensure that the agency can make the necessary changes and meet all the challenges they face, including delivering against more demanding targets and becoming much more cost effective and customer focused," it said.

The NAO found part of the problem lay in past errors, but said that in the past year alone, nearly 25 million was overpaid by absent parents and nearly £16 million underpaid, while £150 million of mistakes were made in the year's £412 million of maintenance assessments.

Ministers confirm that the agency spends 90 per cent of its time making assessments and 10 per cent chasing arrears.

Quiz show contestant hands in prizes pending 'cheating' suit

Owen Bowcott

ATELEVISION quiz fanatic who appeared on more than 70 gameshows yesterday agreed to hand over some of his prizes to a solicitor for safekeeping while he defends his reputation against allegations of cheating.

Trevor Montague, aged 44, a chartered accountant of Crawley, West Sussex, has answered questions on winners' prizes on the quiz show since 1994. The Krypton Factor, Mastermind, Countdown, Brain of Britain and Today's the Day.

But he has been put on the spot by the Fifteen-to-One television programme, which claims he broke his strict rules by appearing more than once on the quiz show.

The veteran presenter William G Stewart is suing

Mr Montague, who admits being on three series of the Channel 4 show after adopting two identities.

During an initial hearing at Wandsworth county court, south-west London, Mr Montague said he was "only having a joke" and had gained no advantage when he appeared as an Italian actor, Steve Romana.

Mr Stewart did not attend court because he was giving an address at the funeral of the scriptwriter Johnny Speight.

After listening to Mr Montague's defence, District Judge Michael Walker ordered that his prizes — two decanters, two goblets and a plinth — be given in for safekeeping.

The judge adjourned the hearing pending further affidavits from both the contestant and Mr Stewart. It is due to resume in September.

Smugglers extort money from illegal immigrants

Chinese fall prey to kidnap gangs

Vikram Dodd

FIFTEEN Chinese illegal immigrants have been taken hostage by kidnap gangs in Britain in the last 18 months, according to a confidential police document.

The kidnapers target arrivals who owe thousands of pounds to "snakeheads", people who help smuggle them into Britain. The immigrants are predominantly from the Fujian province in south-eastern China and agree to pay up to £20,000 to escape.

Last month police freed five Fujian hostages after raiding a flat in west London. They had been held for eight days and beaten by kidnapers who demanded a ransom from their families in China.

The Metropolitan police has recorded 15 kidnappings of Fujian illegal immigrants between January 1997 and June 1998.

According to a Met internal document, seen by the Guardian, the real figure could be much higher.

"Asylum seekers who arrive in the UK owe large sums of money to the smuggling syndicates," says the document.

"It is commonplace to hear of such persons being kidnapped and beaten and held to ransom while relatives in China pay off the outstanding debt. Figures as high as £20,000 are paid. The offences that come to the attention of the police are believed to be the tip of the iceberg."

"Many of those kidnapped are victims of a second syndicate who take the opportunity to squeeze families in China for further large sums of money in order to achieve the release of their relative."



'A thousand Fujianese may find themselves prey to organised crime'

— Wah-Piow Tan
solicitor

Some kidnapers are themselves illegal immigrants who turn to extortion to pay off their debts to "snakeheads".

Chen Lee, in jail in Oxfordshire for kidnapping chef Gino Ping He in London in 1996, told BBC2's East programme, to be broadcast tomorrow, that he turned to kidnapping after work dried up. He said: "I heard stories of people who had been smuggled abroad and were making good money and sending it home from Europe or America."

It cost Chen Lee £15,000, (£10,000) to escape. He flew from China to Hong Kong with a "snakehead" and then on to Bangkok. Another "snakehead" brought him into London where he worked an

80-hour week in a Chinese restaurant in London's Chinatown for £130 a week. The kidnapers often use extreme violence. Cao Xiaoming was chained to a radiator and beaten for 12 days in London in 1996. His kidnapers used a mobile phone to make 727 calls to his wife in Fujian demanding \$40,000 for his release.

A police surgeon found Cao's eardrum had been pierced by the aerial of an Ericsson mobile phone. He was freed after a joint operation by British and Chinese police, and the kidnapers jailed for between 10 and 15 years.

A Chinese businessman, who has helped police in four kidnap operations, but does not want to be named after receiving death threats, believes many cases are never reported.

"People are scared because they are illegal immigrants," he said. "They don't want to settle in Britain, but can't return as they have no papers. Often people leave China not knowing what country in Europe they'll end up in. If they go back to Fujian with debts, they fear being beaten up."

A solicitor, Wah-Piow Tan, who represents asylum seekers from Fujian, fears the problem will get worse and that people may turn to crime if they cannot find work.

He believes the Home Office should allow the migrants to work for three years before leaving Britain, and that the problem will get worse and that people may turn to crime if they cannot find work.

"We have, at least in London, 1,000 Fujianese who have no status, who are on the run. Unless the Home Office has a more progressive policy then there's a danger that this thousand may find themselves prey to organised crime."

Fury over Robinson leak

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

MPs on the powerful Commons standards committee expressed their anger last night after learning that government spin doctors had claimed that Geoffrey Robinson, Paymaster General, will be exonerated today of breaking parliamentary rules.

The MPs were furious that details of a last-minute appeal by the minister to MPs examining the case were given to journalists on Monday.

The committee yesterday agreed a unanimous report, published today, on whether Mr Robinson had broken the rules by failing to declare his directorship in the Commons Register of Members' Interests.

The central allegation is that he failed to declare a £200,000 directorship as chair-

man of Hollis Industries, owned by the disgraced tycoon Robert Maxwell. Mr Robinson has denied receiving the money or breaching Commons rules. He has said the firm's accounts recording the payment were wrong.

He is also accused of failing to declare £150,000 from Central & Sherwood, also owned by the late Mr Maxwell. Mr Robinson said he got the payment too late to declare it before the deadline for annual publication of the register.

But spin doctors, speaking on behalf of Mr Robinson, disclosed that he had sent a new letter to MPs saying that Arthur Andersen, receivers of the bankrupt Hollis Industries, could find no trace of the payment.

Journalists were told: "He will be totally exonerated. They have the information to show he received nothing."

But Robert Sheldon, the committee chairman, said

last night the findings were "far more complex".

One Labour MP told the Guardian: "I have contacted the chairman to see if any information given on Mr Robinson's behalf was a breach of the register." Another disagreed: "Mr Robinson is entitled to release information in his defence."

The Conservatives called for Tony Blair to sack the minister if the committee fails to clear him completely. They highlighted the case of Robert Wareing, Labour MP for Liverpool West Derby, who was suspended from the Commons for a week after failing to register a directorship and shareholding.

Francis Maude, shadow chancellor, said Mr Blair would "stand condemned by his pledge that all malefactors would be 'out on their ear'" if he failed to dismiss Mr Robinson if he got "anything less than an unqualified clearance".

News in brief

Police question jockey over party

CHAMPION jockey Pat Eddery yesterday voluntarily attended an Oxfordshire police station to answer questions over allegations that he stripped at his 13-year-old daughter's birthday party. He was released without charge.

His solicitor said in a statement: "Pat Eddery has today voluntarily spoken with officers of the Thames Valley Police as a result of the allegations appearing in the Sun today."

"He categorically denies the allegations."

A spokeswoman for Thames Valley Police said the matter was still being investigated.

Draper quits Labour journal

LOBBYIST Derek Draper last night severed another embarrassing link by resigning as director of Progress, the New Labour magazine.

With Labour MPs today likely to demand his expulsion from the party for bringing Labour into disrepute, the loquacious lobbyist told the magazine's financial backer, Michael Montague: "While I have now cleared my name — and people know I have done nothing dishonest or wrong — I realise that my boisterous and brusque behaviour has reflected on Progress and those associated with it. I regret that and offer my apologies."

But Mr Draper is heard near to stop. He starts a column on the Daily Telegraph tomorrow before heading for a weekend break in Spain to recover from the traumas of the week since he returned to face the crisis from a short break in Italy. "I am also in negotiation with others about a book, and radio and TV work," he tells Mr Montague in his letter. — Michael White Contracts for MPs, page 8

Court told how baby died

A BABY BOY showed classic signs of "shaken infant syndrome" after he died from a massive brain injury while in the care of his childminder, a pathologist told Norwich crown court yesterday.

Joseph Mackin, aged five months, was "shaken backwards and forwards as hard as you possibly can," said Nat Cary on the second day of the trial of childminder Helen Stacey, aged 41, of North Walsham in Norfolk. She denies murdering the child at her home on May 13, 1997.

His parents, Anthony and Corinne Mackin, also of North Walsham, have told the court that he was healthy when left at 7am, but was "floppy like a rag doll" when seen at 5.15pm, and declared dead an hour later.

Dr Cary, who carried out a post mortem, said the baby died from a head injury that could not have been accidental. "This is a classic injury of the kind seen in what is called 'shaken infant syndrome'," said Dr Cary.

"It is basically picking up an infant and shaking it backwards and forwards as hard as you possibly can." The trial continues.

Trance volunteer cried 'kill McKenna'

Nick Hopkins

THE girlfriend of a man who claims that the hypnotist Paul McKenna turned him into a schizophrenic yesterday as she described his mental breakdown.

Beverly Gibbs told the High Court that Christopher Gains, aged 30, went through an "horrendous" ordeal after seeing one of Mr McKenna's live shows. She said he would pace around his bedroom at night chanting "kill McKenna", refuse to take showers because he feared the hypnotist was waiting for him in the bathroom, and thought monsters were lurking outside his house. "I could not stand to see the man I love behaving like this," she said.

Mr McKenna, of Downley, Buckinghamshire, and Ms Gibbs attended the show at the Swan Theatre in High Wycombe on March 10, 1994.

Mr McKenna volunteered to be put in a trance and was made to believe he was a ballet dancer, the Rolling Stone Mick Jagger, an interpreter for aliens from outer space.

Mr McKenna's live shows, an orchestra conductor and a naughty schoolboy. Nine days after the performance, Mr McKenna, a furniture collector, was admitted to a psychiatric unit suffering from acute schizophrenia and has not worked since. He is

suing Mr McKenna for damages of £200,000, claiming that the illness was caused by his negligence.

Yesterday, Ms Gibbs told Mr Justice Toulson that Mr McKenna leapt out of his seat to join Mr McKenna on stage when he asked for volunteers. She thought his enthusiasm had been triggered by Mr McKenna's choice of words.

She remembered he had said: "If anybody wants to come up, they should come up... Now!" She said her boyfriend was a karate devotee, and the word "now" was one he had been trained to obey.

It was "out of character for him to be the star of the show," she said. "He felt a compulsion to get up there."

After the show, Mr McKenna's eyes were "glassy", he complained of headaches and had aggressive outbursts, including smashing up his stereo.

"He was scared to go upstairs because he felt McKenna was up there waiting for him," said Ms Gibbs. "He thought God was watching him, telling him off for things that he had done in the past."

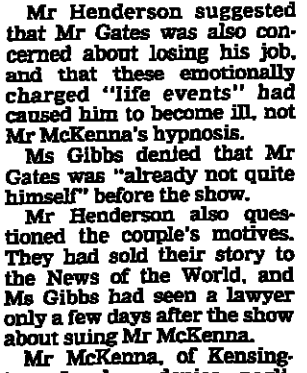
Cross-examined by Roger Henderson QC, Ms Gibbs admitted her boyfriend had suffered personal traumas before 1994: divorce from his wife, Tracy, in 1993, and a car crash he had caused by drink driving before Christmas in 1992. He had been mistakenly worried that his stupidity could have killed a child.

Mr Henderson suggested that Mr McKenna was also concerned about losing his job, and that these emotionally charged "life events" had caused him to become ill, not Mr McKenna's hypnosis.

Ms Gibbs denied that Mr McKenna was "already not quite himself" before the show.

Mr Henderson also questioned the couple's motives. They had told their story to the News of the World, and Ms Gibbs had seen a lawyer only a few days after the show about suing Mr McKenna.

Mr McKenna, of Kensington, London, denies negligence and contends that Mr McKenna's illness was not caused by hypnosis. The hearing continues today.



Christopher Gates — "horrendous ordeal"

London gets with it, after a fashion

Susannah Barron on the young designers making their mark with a first show for men

IT WAS a long time in coming, but the first London Men's Fashion Week swung down the catwalk yesterday, following the example set by the Paris, Milan and New York menswear shows.

Lasting three days, the event, at the Café Royal, London, has 12 catwalk shows, an exhibition for 22 designers, and assorted presentations and parties.

Appropriately, it kicked off in Savile Row — home of traditional English tailoring — where the designer Margaret Howell was opening her new menswear store.

Richard Craig, Margaret Howell's managing direc-

tor, said: "Hopefully, this is the start of something. We have the design talent, and can keep it going."

The week does not have all the big name designers. Paul Smith opted to take his spring/summer '99 collection to Paris as usual, and Vivienne Westwood, who shows her menswear in Milan, was absent but sent a message of support.

But the event is heavy with new talent. Neil Adams, in business for barely three years, unveiled a street-smart collection, with subtly shiny trousers worn with bomber jackets, vests and boxy shirts — inspired, apparently, by young criminals.

Yesterday's schedule, however, also found room for the more established Paul Costelloe, among such young gents as Linnansa, Designworks, and Ken Dismah.

London Men's Fashion Week is not yet on a par with the menswear shows in Italy and France. Milan is seen as the male fashion capital, attracting big hitters such as Calvin Klein, Jean-Paul Gaultier and Donna Karan alongside Armani, Versace and Dolce & Gabbana. But the organisers were undaunted. "Our aim was to find a niche in the market," said John Rowley, London Men's Fashion Week organiser. "Not compete with Milan and Paris, but give a platform to new talent."

Style, G2, page 8



Simple and slimline... models show Neil Adams' street-wise collection

School in well-to-do Henley forced to pay pupils to clean

Wrook Chaudhary
Education Correspondent

PUPILS at an Oxfordshire school have been recruited as part-time cleaners because too few adults will work for the wages.

Sixteen pupils at Giffords school, Henley-on-Thames, will earn up to £12.50 per week for a maximum six hours a day over the summer holidays.

Duties will include cleaning toilets, floors and carpets. Only pupils aged over 16 are being taken on their story to the school said it had to recruit pupils because lack of interest from adult cleaners was affecting standards of cleanliness.

It said that, because people in the area were wealthy, adults did not want to work as cleaners at a rate of £3.75 an

hour. A letter sent to parents from governors said that there had been concern over the lack of cleaners for some time and that a thorough four-week clean up was needed.

The letter added: "Among other advantages, the involvement of students in maintaining their working environment will, we hope, have a positive knock-on effect."

John Lockyer, the head teacher, said: "We have a problem in this area with recruiting adult cleaners because the rates of pay are so high in this particular area."

Mr Lockyer said that employing pupils was like giving them a summer job. "It is possible we might consider employing them regularly in the evenings if we continue to have problems recruiting," he said.

Kohl rival in U-turn on single currency

Stephen Bates
in Strasbourg

GERHARD Schröder, Germany's Social Democrat leader and favourite to beat Chancellor Helmut Kohl in September's elections, staged a spectacular conversion to Euro-enthusiasm at the European Parliament in Strasbourg yesterday.

With Mr Kohl apparently growing ever more sceptical about Germany's relations with Europe as he struggles against his rival's 10-point lead in polls, Mr Schröder chose his first official visit to the parliament to announce his conversion to the single currency and a more federal

presidency at the beginning of next year.

His attitude would be crucial to the launch of the single currency and the EU's programme of structural reforms, including wholesale revision of the common agricultural policy.

Mr Schröder conceded Germany would remain a chief contributor to the EU's budget, would support EU institutional reforms and could back greater flexibility in decision-making — issues on which Mr Kohl has expressed increasing reservations.

"The Federal Republic will continue to be a large net contributor in the future; as a relatively prosperous country it will not evade its responsibility in solidarity with the other member states. Everyone knows that a simplistic I-want-my-money-back policy is bound to fail," he said.

His change in attitude contrasts strongly with the tactics of the leader with whom he is most often compared, Tony Blair, who before and since the last general election has been very cautious about striking Euro-enthusiast attitudes for domestic consumption.

German commentators said last night that the remarks, cutting across Mr Kohl's position, were sure to loom large in the election campaign and represented a growing recognition by Mr Schröder and his advisers that no German chancellor could sustain a Euro-sceptic position.

At a press conference Mr Schröder said: "We have to make the single currency a success, whatever the view was in the past. It must not be allowed to fail, because the implications would be cruel for the people of Europe."

In a final swipe at his rival he added: "I appreciate the historic achievements of Chancellor Kohl and, however acrimonious the election campaign becomes, I would never deny them."

European Union structure. He told a meeting of the parliament's Socialist group: "The European nations can hold their own in the globalising world of the future and benefit from it only by strengthening their union with a single currency and an integrated economic and employment policy."

His remarks contrast strongly with his position earlier this year, when he promised to defend German interests "with brutality" and described monetary union as a sickly, premature child.

Mr Schröder appears well placed to end Mr Kohl's 16 years of power in the elections on September 27, in which case his administration will take over the EU



Iraqi women attend a rally in Baghdad yesterday to mark the 40th anniversary of the coup that overthrew King Faisal II and created a republic

PHOTOGRAPH: KARIM SAHBI

Raped for the 'crime' of being Chinese

John Aglionby reports from Medan, Sumatra, where women are terrorised out of envy

LISA'S relatives are amazed she is still alive. On June 18, a week after her ninth birthday, this Chinese-Indonesian girl who lives 20 miles outside the north Sumatran city of Medan chose to walk home from school alone rather than wait for her elder sister Martha.

She never made it. Less than 400 yards from her house a man on a motorbike stopped and offered Lisa a lift. She accepted but the man, named Yudi, drove straight past her house without stopping. He took her instead to a nearby sugarcane field and raped her before taking her back to his house 50 miles away.

There, with the knowledge of his wife and three children, he kept Lisa, who is less than 4ft and weighs only three and

a half stone, incarcerated for six days. "Lisa does not remember being raped again but she said Yudi dragged her seven times during that time and on each occasion she woke up in great pain," Lisa's mother Ekki said. "We are convinced she was raped again and again."

Early on June 24 Yudi returned Lisa to her home. She spent the next 10 days in hospital. Even though she led the police to Yudi's house, she is afraid to go home and is staying with friends, along with her mother and two sisters.

Martha said Lisa's ordeal was not an isolated case. "Hundreds of Chinese women have been raped or assaulted around here since May and the rapes are still going on. Only a couple of days before,

a 56-year-old Chinese woman had been raped."

The sexual terrorism of the Chinese community in and around Indonesia's third-largest city began in early May when riots broke out after several protests against the then president, Suharto.

While the looting and burning of Chinese properties stopped after a week, the rape of women of the minority that is hated and envied for its economic success has continued. Yet only five women have reported being raped or sexually assaulted.

Sabaruddin, the head of the Medan branch of the Indonesian Advocacy Association, said there were three reasons why more people had not come forward. "They are too shy because of the stigma—they don't know

where to report, because they don't trust the police and there are no women's support groups; and they are afraid of being terrorised again."

Another reason why more people are not campaigning to end the atrocities is that, unlike in Jakarta where many women were raped and killed in riots in May, only one rape-linked death has been confirmed in Medan.

"She was a 17-year-old schoolgirl who was kidnapped in a taxi while going home with a friend," said a Chinese woman who asked to remain anonymous.

"The friend managed to escape but this other girl was taken away." She was found unconscious a few days later, her body covered in Arabic graffiti and her vagina full of broken glass and nails.

"She was so badly injured and so badly traumatised her mother asked the doctors to end her life," the woman said, adding that other women had

probably died but their fates would never be known.

"Many of the Chinese here are Buddhist and they have to bury their dead the same day. This is more important for them than to keep the body as evidence and report the case to the police."

"They are targeting rich and poor alike," said one of Martha's friends. "They just seem to hate us and want to keep us living in fear."

Four other Chinese women have moved into the same house as Ekki and her daughters. They rarely go out and never alone. The front door is locked and protected by metal grilles. Few Chinese women are seen on the streets.

The police have formed a team to investigate the rapes but no one in the Chinese community expects results.

"Even though we knew where Yudi lived, we had to go to the police twice and pay them before they acted," said Yusuf Suci, a businessman

friend of Lisa's family, who helped after the ordeal.

The attack on Medan's Chinese community eclipses even the events of 1965. Then hundreds were killed in Medan during a countrywide purge of communists and, by association, Chinese, in the wake of a failed coup blamed on the Communist Party.

Chinese-owned shops and businesses are also attacked. In Medan, 25 miles from Medan, a mob attacked 42 shops owned by Chinese-Indonesians, stealing or damaging goods. "The mob only left the clothes I was wearing," said Siau Lie, the owner of an electronic goods shop.

On Saturday three chicken farms outside the city were attacked. All the hens were stolen and the buildings burned. Ong Akui, who owned one of them, said: "It seems they want to drive us away but we have nowhere to go. So we have to stay here living in terror and poverty."

New York jury deals blow to firebrand reverend

Joanna Coles in New York

THE Reverend Al Sharpton, New York's most controversial black rights activist, suffered a crushing setback in his hopes of being elected as the city's mayor when he and two of his former advisers were found liable for defaming a young prosecutor by accusing him of a rape he did not commit.

As he waited to find out how large the damages against him would be, Mr Sharpton — model for the rabble-rousing Reverend Bacon in Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities* — insisted he would appeal against the verdict.

The trial in Poughkeepsie, in New York state, had been extraordinarily bitter — extra security officers had to be drafted in after lawyers threatened each other, and on one occasion the judge walked out saying he could stand no more.

But after the eight-month hearing, the jury — which by the end had dwindled to just

six members, four white and two black — found that Mr Sharpton, Alton Maddox and C. Vernon Mason had recklessly defamed Steven Pagones by publicly stating that he had orchestrated the kidnapping, gang rape and sodomy of a 15-year-old black girl, Tawana Brawley.

When Tawana disappeared from her home in November 1987, the country was split along racial lines. She returned four days later, claiming to have been abducted and raped by "white cops". She was apparently found by her mother in a dustbin bag covered in faeces with the word "nigger" scrawled over her chest.

Mr Sharpton, together with Mr Mason and Mr Maddox, both lawyers, immediately appointed himself Tawana's adviser and held rallies in New York to garner support and publicity for her cause.

Three months later, after a police investigation made no headway, he held a televised press conference and accused Mr Pagones, a young lawyer working in the local district

attorney's office, of leading the gang rape. The basis of his allegations was that Tawana had once pointed to Mr Pagones's face in a local paper.

Mr Pagones, who needed bodyguards at his wedding in 1988, always denied the accusations. Eight months later a grand jury exonerated him, deciding that Tawana had concocted the story with her mother to deceive her violent stepfather after she spent four nights with a boyfriend.

Ms Brawley has never spoken publicly about what she claims happened to her. She only wrote it down, once, on a notepad belonging to a black policeman.

Now a nurse in Washington, she refused yet again to comment yesterday, saying she wanted her private life to remain private. Though she has been subpoenaed many times, she has consistently failed to turn up for any hearing and has been declared in contempt of court many times.

Though Mr Pagones began his suit 10 years ago, the three defendants delayed court proceedings until last

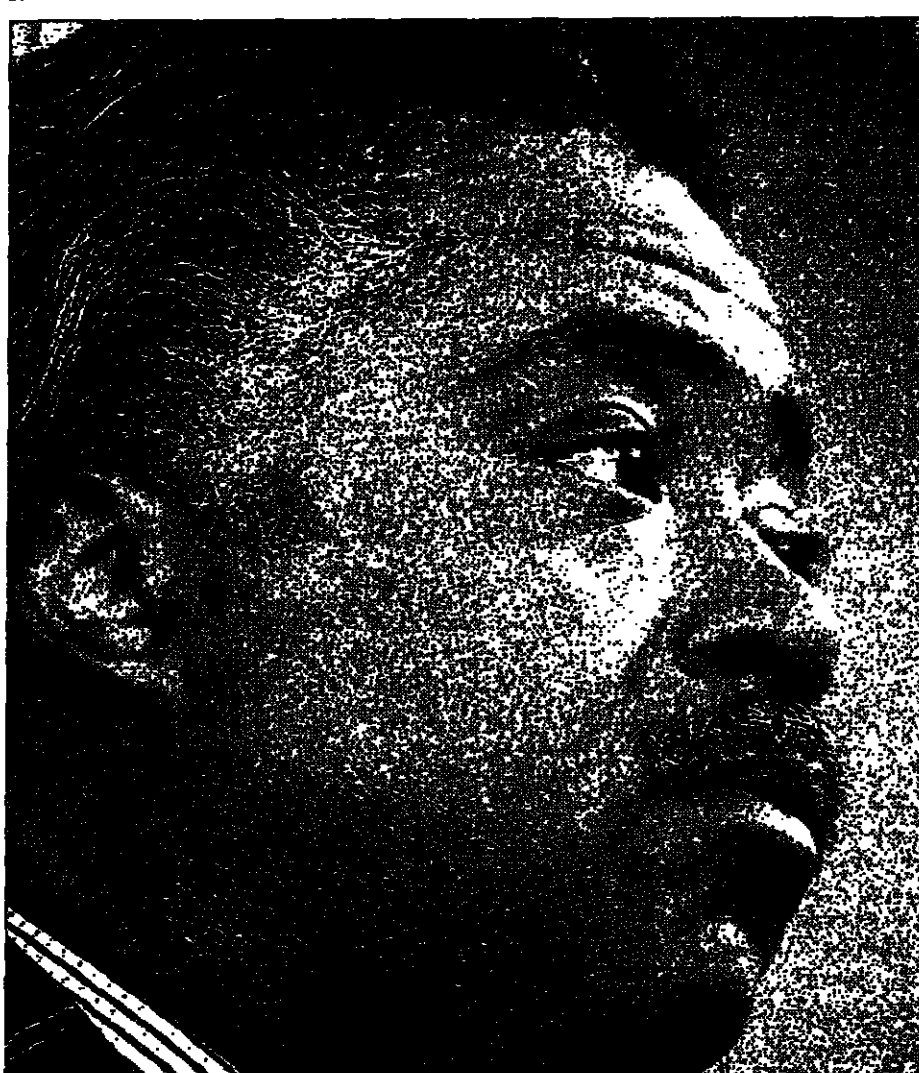
November. Dozens of witnesses, including the medical staff who treated Tawana in hospital after she was found, were required to give evidence. None believed she had been raped.

Though it became increasingly clear that Tawana's story was not all it seemed, Mr Sharpton repeated his accusations over the years. Yesterday, still with eyes on a mayoral election or even a seat in the United States Senate, he said he would continue to fight for the truth.

The trial cost Mr Pagones \$300,000 (£190,000) in legal fees and his job in the district attorney's office, after it was decided the publicity would harm his office. Though resolutely vindicated, he said the trial had been "bitter-sweet".

"There's a lot of pain," Mr Pagones said. "A lot of wounds were opened."

As they waited to hear what punitive damages would be awarded against them, Mr Maddox and Mr Mason let it be known they were bankrupt. Mr Sharpton's finances remain more of a mystery.



Controversial black rights activist Al Sharpton (left) is awaiting the size of damages awarded against him after he defamed a prosecutor, Steven Pagones (top), falsely accusing him of orchestrating the kidnapping, gang rape and sodomy of 15-year-old Tawana Brawley (above)

UK denies querying Czech choice

Neal Ascherson

BRTAIN yesterday denied it had objected to the appointment of Jan Kavan, a controversial former London-based dissident, as foreign minister in the Czech government now being formed.

Mr Kavan, a senator, is the front-runner for the post in the minority Social Democrat cabinet. He is attacked by political rivals on the grounds that he is unacceptable in Britain and has been convicted of perjury in a British court.

In a highly unusual move, the Foreign Office issued a statement saying there was "no question" of Mr Kavan being *persona non grata*.

"It is for the Czechs to choose their own foreign minister," the statement said. "We would have no

objections to the appointment of Mr Kavan... He is a frequent and welcome visitor here. He was here last week as part of a delegation accompanying the chairman of the Czech senate, Mr Petr Pithart."

In a letter to Mr Kavan in June last year, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said: "I have taken the precaution of having the official record checked. I can confirm that there is no suggestion that you have ever been guilty of committing perjury in the United Kingdom or, indeed, any other similar offence."

An official source said Mr Kavan enjoyed warm personal relations with Mr Cook. It is understood he is also on good terms with George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, and with Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, whom he got to know during his 20-year ex-

ile in London. Mr Kavan, whose mother was English, lived in London between the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the "Velvet Revolution" of 1989. During those years he supplied information about Czech dissidents and the Charter 77 movement to the British media, and maintained secret links with opposition groups in Czechoslovakia.

This is the latest chapter in a saga of accusations that has plagued Mr Kavan in London and Prague. The "perjury" charge, raised last Saturday in an open letter published in Prague and signed by a group of rightwing politicians, refers not to a court case but to hearings by the Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC).

In 1981 Mr Kavan accused the British television journalist Julian Man-

nion of falsely stating in a programme that a van with banned material sent secretly to Prague by Mr Kavan and seized by the Czech secret police had contained a list of dissident names and addresses.

The BCC found against Mr Mannion. But in 1992, on the basis of documents from the secret police archives, it reversed its judgment and said Mr Kavan had "misled" it by withholding important information. Mr Kavan excuses himself by saying that in 1981 he had to protect underground contacts.

Last month's Czech parliamentary elections left the Social Democrats, Mr Kavan's party, as the largest party but without an absolute majority. Milos Zeman, the party leader and prime minister-in-waiting, is trying to form a minority government.

education

Every Tuesday in the

The Guardian INTERNATIONAL

سكنا من الاصل

Chirac uses World Cup win to kick at racists

Anti-immigrant sentiments are suddenly out of fashion in France, writes Paul Webster

PRESIDENT Jacques Chirac yesterday paid tribute to France's "tricolour and multi-colour" triumph in winning the World Cup, and warned the right wing to drop support for National Front policy on racial discrimination.

The Gaullist president's He praised the coach who resisted pressure to bar immigrants from the team

sharp words during a Bastille Day press conference were the first public confirmation that Sunday's 3-0 victory over Brazil will have profound political and social consequences in the run-up to next year's European elections.

"A country needs, at certain moments, to come together, around an idea that makes it proud of itself," Mr Chirac said in a television interview before presenting the

national football team to the crowd. "This victory has shown the solidarity, the cohesion... that France had a soul, or more precisely that it was looking for a soul."

As if to prove him right, an estimated 150,000 people attended the annual Bastille Day parade on the Champs-Élysées. Not as many as came to the post-match celebrations but twice the number that showed up last year.

Mr Chirac warned that discussion within moderate right-wing movements of extremist demands for "national preference" (a euphemism for discrimination) was out of place and potentially dangerous.

The 22 members of the national football squad were guests of honour at the Elysée Palace garden party where the coach, Aimé Jacquet, was presented with the Legion of Honour. The symbolism of a side made up of players from differing ethnic and religious backgrounds was seized on by Mr Chirac. Distrust of immigrants was, he said, contrary to France's humanist, democratic and republican principles.

His message was implicitly aimed at supporters of the Gaullist former prime minister Edouard Balladur, who is lobbying for a meeting with the National Front leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, to discuss benefits for immigrants who have not yet been granted French citizenship — a fundamental nationalist election theme.

Demand to adopt National Front doctrine has grown



President Chirac with the French football team and their families at yesterday's Bastille Day celebrations at the Elysée. PHOTOGRAPH: JEAN-CHRISTOPHE KAHN

since the movement's recent election successes in which it won a share in government with moderate conservative parties in four of France's 22 regions. The alliance has already led to changes in cultural, sporting and educational programmes to suit National Front priorities.

Mr Chirac implied that he was ready to take action to stop a drift towards racist policies by praising the example set by Mr Jacquet, who resisted National Front pressure to exclude recent immigrants from the French team.

Mr Jacquet incarnates all that is best in France; its seriousness, its humanity, its determination to be close to the people... and its tolerance."

"This victory shows solidarity and cohesion. It shows that France has a soul or is searching for one. I hope that after the festa we will keep something strong from this national feeling. This tricolour and multi-colour team has given a beautiful image of France and its humanity."

The president, whose enthusiastic support for the side was one of the most striking images of the competition, reflected dominant public sentiment in radio chat shows, street interviews and newspaper letter columns.

'This victory has shown the solidarity, the cohesion... that France had a soul, or more precisely that it was looking for a soul'

President Chirac

'The national and social impact is so strong, collective and extraordinary that women are now involved like any other human beings'

Elisabeth Badinter

impact is so strong, collective and extraordinary that women are now involved like any other human beings," she said. "More and more young women are going to want to play football. It's possible that female soccer will be as important in 20 years time as male football."

Gender lost in translation and sexual politics

John Hooper in Rome

CONFERENCE discussions were always likely to be wide-ranging, but it is a fair bet that few delegates came to Rome expecting to learn about sodomy in Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, the issue arose during one of several exchanges on the thorny issue of gender.

Delegations from various Islamic countries have joined forces to demand the reopen-

ing of parts of the treaty it had been thought were agreed before the conference began. The problem has arisen partly because Arabic does not have a word that equates precisely with gender; it was translated in the Arabic draft as "type of sex".

It was therefore unclear whether parts of the treaty outlawing persecution on grounds of gender might make governments with laws banning homosexual acts liable for prosecution by the proposed court.

Hence the worries of the Azerbaijani delegate about his country's anti-sodomy legislation.

Women's groups say the Muslim delegations have been egged on by representatives from the Holy See. The Vatican has long harboured misgivings about the term "gender", fearing it could be used to replace the distinction between men and women with a five-way division between bisexuals, homosexual men and women, and heterosexual men and women.

A Holy See delegate said its chief representative had not raised the subject at the conference.

The Pope's representatives have, however, openly challenged another proposal that includes in the list of war crimes "forced pregnancy".

The Vatican suspects another loaded definition that could later be used to justify abortions. But women's groups protest that they want its inclusion in the treaty only so that outrages are covered such as those in Bosnia where women were raped specifically to make them pregnant as a way of altering the country's ethnic balance.

"Our experience is that if you don't enumerate it, it doesn't get prosecuted," said Widney Brown of Human Rights Watch. "The Vatican's representatives are so bent on undermining anyone promoting abortion or gay rights that they are prepared to harm women."

Winnie casts shadow over Mandela birthday

David Barnard in Johannesburg

SOUTH AFRICA is preparing for the birthday party of the decade when Nelson Mandela turns 80 on Saturday. But as always when the president takes centre stage, attention is being distracted by a squabble in the wings involving his irrepresible former wife, Winnie Mandela.

The latest row relates to her attempt to sue the minister of sport, Steve Tshwete, for describing her as a "wayward charlatan" and an "armchair populist". The African National Congress leadership is threatening her with disciplinary action if she does not withdraw the case.

Mrs Mandela has been reported to be on the point of resigning from the ANC in protest against Mr Tshwete's attack and efforts by the foreign minister, Alfred Nzo, to have her surrender her diplomatic passport.

resignation rumour with an indignant statement: "I am the ANC and I will die as the ANC." But it was confirmed that she had sent angry letters to the party's provincial leaders protesting at what she sees as her victimisation.

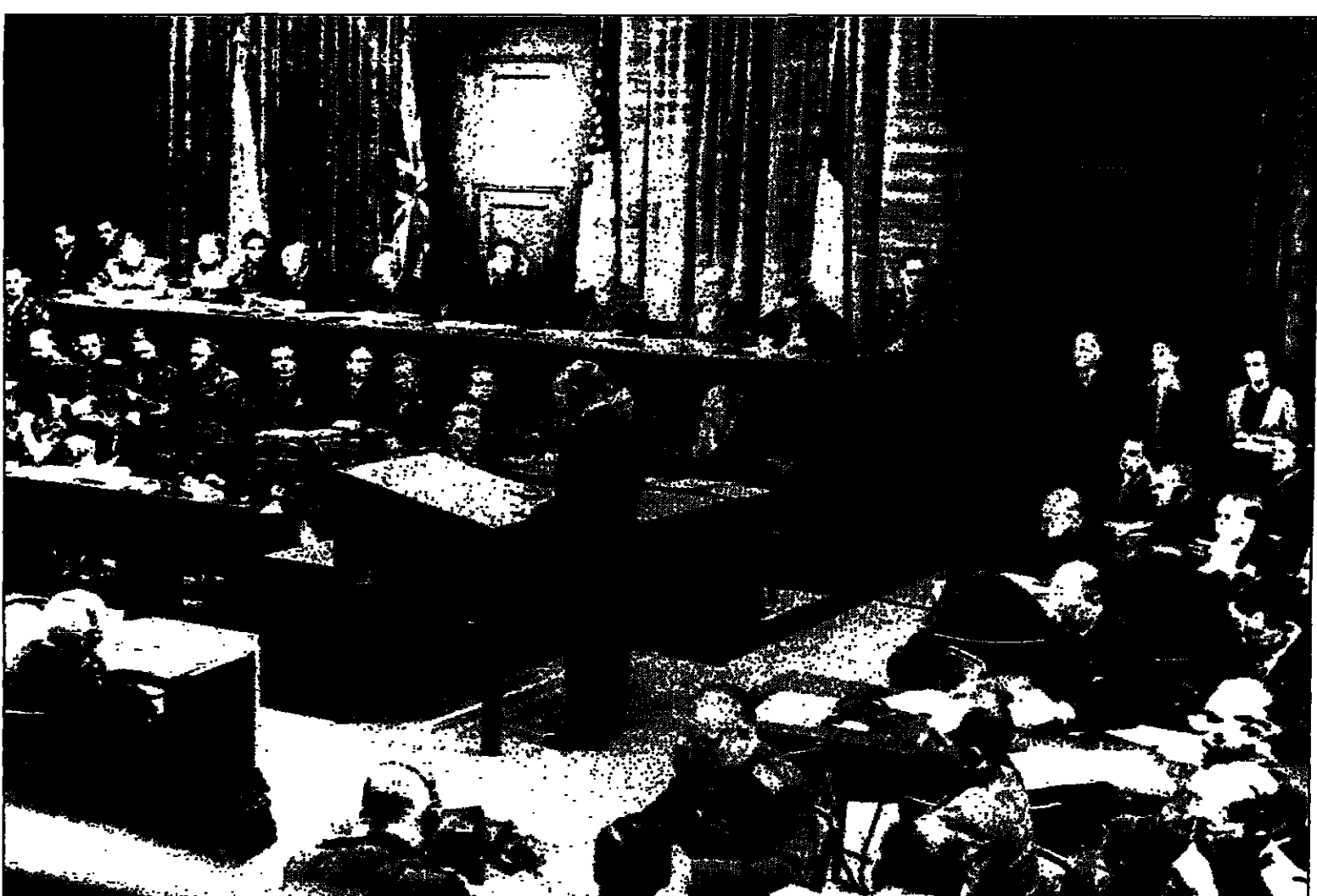
Mr Mandela's birthday is being celebrated with particular enthusiasm this year, because it will be his last in office. He has indicated that he will retire in favour of his deputy, Thabo Mbeki, before next year's general election.

South African society is scrambling to honour the occasion. Mail is being postmarked with a message of congratulations. Businesses are swamping the local press with orders for advertising space to wish him well.

The celebrations will begin on Thursday with a party hosted by the president in the Kruger game reserve, to be attended by 1,400 underprivileged children. On Sunday there will be a banquet outside Johannesburg attended by 2,000 local and international celebrities.

Self-interest brings court into contempt

Cynicism and special pleading are marring attempts to create world justice. John Hooper in Rome and Ian Black report



Judgment at Nuremberg... the trial of 22 German war criminals was one of only ad hoc four courts set up to hear cases of genocide and crimes against humanity — the others were at Tokyo after the second world war, at Arusha and the Hague to judge war crimes in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia

ference were to approve such a formula, he warned, the US would "actively oppose" the court from its inception.

Underlying the US position is a deep-seated horror at the prospect of its citizens being subject to other people's justice.

The US's proposal would stop the court trying anyone from a country that had not ratified the treaty. If its proposal is not included, the US is unlikely to ratify because it would be endorsing a court that claimed the right to try US citizens. But if it were included, it would be equally unlikely to ratify because this would grant the court the very right it claimed.

Given the improbability of genuine US backing, it may seem doubly ironic that so much effort should have been spent on trying to meet US objections. But winning global ratification for an international treaty can take decades, and it is hoped that by adjusting as much as possible to US sensitivities the conference can increase the odds of a ratification by Congress in 10 or 20 years' time.

It is agreed, for example, that the court will accept a soldier's plea that he, or she, was obeying orders — the argument used by Adolf Eichmann. Defence counsel need show only that "the person was under a legal obligation to obey orders of the government or the superior in question... the person did not know that the order was unlawful; and... the order was not manifestly unlawful".

Christopher Hall, a legal adviser to Amnesty International, calls this "a repudiation of Nuremberg, of Tokyo, of the war crimes tribunals for Rwanda and ex-Yugoslavia, and of the International Law Commission's draft code of crimes adopted in 1968".

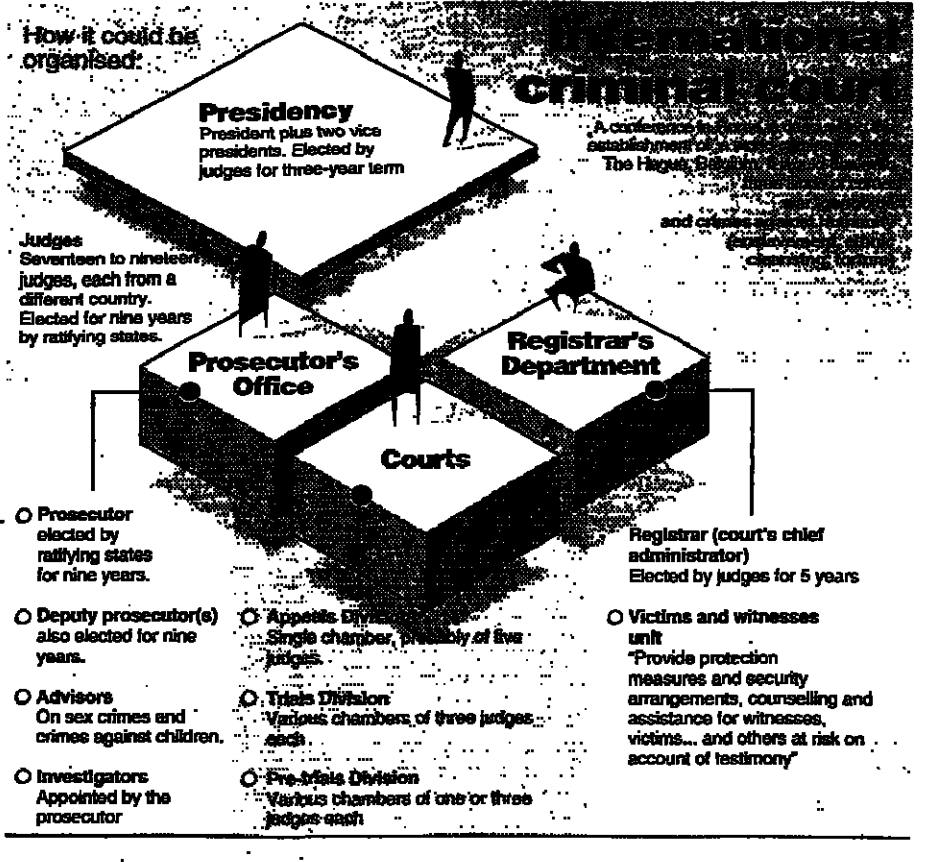
The draft treaty submitted last Friday by the conference chairman, Philippe Kirsch of Canada, has alarmed not only pressure groups such as Amnesty but also many delegates. In particular, it left in a US proposal to let the court try war crimes "only when committed as part of a plan or policy".

Britain, praised at earlier stages for its principled stand, has been criticised for failing to adopt a clear position, especially on the powers of the independent prosecutor, though on Friday Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, urged Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of state, to soften

Washington's hard line. Mr Cook made the ICC a centrepiece of his "ethical foreign policy" but has fallen

foul of suspicions from the Home Office and indifference from Tony Blair.

"There were hopes that Britain would stride in and take a lead," said one lobbyist. "But they haven't done that."



Comment

Diary

Matthew Norman

At the BBC, distasteful rumours surround the Government's refusal to appoint David Puttnam as the new vice chairman. After he was invited to apply for the post, it is thought that John Birt decided against Lord Puttnam, and put the word around that he was "not intelligent enough" to understand the golden future he himself has planned, and had a word with his close friend and walking companion Mandy Mandelson, who amiably suggested in Downing Street that Puttnam was not to be trusted. Puttnam's name was removed from the short list, and although a furious Chris Smith put it straight back, the damage was done. I find this hard to believe of Birt, almost as hard as the suggestion that he allowed new Labour peer Melvyn Bragg to be sacked from *Start The Week* (crazy so, given that David Mellor, who has a government-appointed football job, presents a football show) out of jealousy. Birt is hardly the kind of man to resent the fact that he left LWT just too soon to qualify for the share options that made Melvyn wealthy. It's not like him.

ISO ennobled recently (for services to the Tory party and the Colombian balance of trade figures) was Tim Bell. The peerage gave no one greater pleasure than the *Diary*. Well, perhaps there was someone after all. "Tim," reads a fax from Washington which he has been proudly sharing with admirers. "Dennis and I are thrilled that you are to join the House of Lords. It is really good news and so richly deserved." (How true, how very true. Is there a nobler soul alive than Tim? The old team will be in action again! Warm congratulations, Margaret. "The old team in action again... bless the mad old trout, she still knows how to instill the fear of God.")

I AM delighted to see Dolly Draper cementing his reputation for journalistic integrity with a *Daily Telegraph* profile of Ed Balls and his highly regarded MP missus Yvette Cooper. Here is one piece of Dolly's work that was certainly not cleared in advance with Mandy — perhaps because it was shown to Mr Balls, who (when agreeing to the interview before *Dollygate* broke) demanded and was given full copy approval. The article is headlined "Will this couple make it to Number 10?" and concludes that, yes, indeed they will. Splendid, fearless stuff. Dolly may have ditched his chances of political progress, but on this form a staff job with *Hell* magazine is his for the asking.

THE race to become Mayor of London attracts a surprise contender. He is Charles Bronson. Her Majesty's most dangerous and famously bearded house guest. The official press release: Charles sends to announce his candidacy is an engaging montage of images, in which a pig appears in the upper section of an open top double decker bus, while he stands at the centre with Eric on his head. "If you want a strong, loyal and caring mayor, there's only one choice," goes his slogan. "Charles Bronson, the only sane choice." In truth, Charles may not appeal to all (after various unfortunate hostage-taking incidents, the prison governor vote may be beyond him), and current market research shows him trailing Ken Livingstone, and only just ahead of Lord Archer.

REMARKABLE find has been sent to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington by an amateur archaeologist. "Dear Sir, Thank you for your latest submission to the Institute, labelled T3321-D, layer seven, next to the clothesline post, Humanoid skull," replies Harvey Rowe, curator of antiquities. "We have given this specimen a careful and detailed examination, and regret to inform you that we disagree with your theory that it represents conclusive proof of the presence of Early Man in Charleston County two million years ago. Rather, it appears that what you have found is the head of a Barbie doll, of the variety one of our staff, who has small children, believes to be 'Malibu Barbie'."



The Third Way is staring Labour in the face. But they haven't seen it yet

Jonathan Freedland



WHAT'S the big idea? What's the single, unifying creed that defines the Government? It's the question that unites friends and enemies alike. What, besides this policy or that slogan, does New Labour actually believe in?

Politicians have struggled since May last year to find an answer, searching for the connecting thread of logic that might tie together the various schemes and initiatives pursued by Tony Blair and his ministers. What, they wonder, is the creed that unites welfare-to-work, say, and devolution for Scotland? Why is this Government reforming the House of Lords and privatising the air traffic control system? Some speak of a Third Way — but what does the phrase actually mean?

Those looking for clues spent yesterday poring over Gordon Brown's spending plans. As a three-year blueprint this must be the clearest window yet on the soul of New Labour — authored by the Chancellor, the Government's resident ideas man. And yet, for all its force and internal coherence, Brown's Commons speech still lacked an explicit articulation of the guiding principle which animates this Government. The closest Brown came was "modernisation" — mentioning the word 12 times.

Some regard this as a positive development, a sign that our politics has moved away from the stilted dogma of the past to a more open pragmatism. Now ideology matters less than competence and practicality: what's good is what works. But New Labour should be wary of this brand of Politics.

Lite. It's seductive now, while times are good. But when the Government eventually encounters turbulence, most likely in a recession, it will pine for a guiding star of principle. Margaret Thatcher was able to weather the storms of the early 1980s partly because she was laminated by conviction. Even when her course for the country proved choppy and traumatic, voters stuck with her confidence that they knew where she was going.

New Labour cannot yet say the same. But it might. For the Government could quite easily describe its mission in grand language. It could say it aspires to a revolutionary goal, one which informs every decision it takes: the establishment in Britain of popular sovereignty.

In that single phrase it might capture both its economic and constitutional programme, arguing that both are means to the same end: allowing people to be in charge of their own lives.

That principle would, in an instant, lend coherence to the current ragbag of changes to our political system. Ministers could explain that Scotland is to have its own Parliament, Wales and Northern Ireland their assemblies and London its mayor because Whitehall has no business running those places from on high: the Scots, Welsh, Northern Irish and Londoners should be in charge of their own communities.

(The same logic would rule out a second chamber chosen on the nod of the Prime Minister.)

The overhaul of the benefits system could be cast in the same terms. In the past, Labour could say, the poor were to be "looked after" by the well-off, via the mechanism of the state. Now, New Labour could explain, it wants to wean the poor off that dependency. It wants single mothers and the young unemployed not to be told by government how much they have to spend each week, but to be able to earn their own money. It could argue that there is nothing more liberating than the move from passive recipient to active participant — from hand-out to hand-up — and that even the least privileged have the right to be in charge of their own lives.

COURAGING through that idea would be a new kind of wariness of the state. Of course, New Labour has already made its break from the status of Labour past, abandoning what Tony Blair calls "the old tax-and-spend". But so far that case has been presented in terms of electoral reality, not philosophical principle: the Labour party of the 1990s has accepted that in the post-Thatcher era people just won't vote for higher taxes and greater spending.

What New Labour has failed to do is make that case in principled terms of its own. That is only natural at 4.30am. But please appreciate that I have another 24,642 constituents to visit.

"What is this? Oh, this is my toolbox. I appreciate it looks more like a small handcart, but I must be prepared to carry out a vast range of services. The trailer behind the handcart is the reference library. Indeed it was the reference library before it closed. "Are you still there? I am sorry the head strap fell over my eyes. Yes, it is an interesting device. They are manufactured in Tibet to assist in the pulling of the handcart. They are available, at a small discount, to members of the parliamentary Labour Party. Now I wonder if it is possible to offer you some small service?" "Oh come, surely there is something? I cannot but notice that the hinge on the front gate was loose and the paint... I see. Well perhaps you have a pet that requires deworming?" "I see. Well, possibly dry rot or areas of infestation. Carpet mites can be espe-

nothing inherently progressive in constantly expanding the reach of government — that there is a liberation in helping people become masters of their own lives.

Gordon Brown hinted at that left-leaning brand of anti-statism yesterday, explaining that he wanted to spend public money only on those tasks which government alone could perform: chiefly health and education. If the state need not be involved, it shouldn't be, he said. Hence the new batch of privatisations and Labour's urging of business to take on tasks previously left to Whitehall.

What it might amount to is a project which reunites economic liberalism with its political counterpart — free market economics with genuine self-government. If New Labour were to embrace it fully, there would be big steps to take. It would have to junk the manicism which led it to be based-on-the-bone, for example, or reconsider its current indulgence of the monarchy. For, as the American Revolution of 222 years ago proved, if we the people are sovereign, there is no place for an unelected monarch claiming to be sovereign in the same land.

These are big leaps for Labour and the left. But there are useful precedents, both in the land of popular sovereignty — the United States — and in our own, radical past. We don't really need to dream up a Third Way: we've found it already.

Jonathan Freedland is the author of *Bring Home The Revolution: How Britain Can Live The American Dream* (4th Estate)

More like France

Polly Toynbee



GAZING at the magnificence of the gleaming new Stade de France, shimmering, hovering in the night sky, millions of World Cup viewers across the globe admired the glory of what a confident high-spending state can do. The French enjoy the sense of national pride that springs from collective endeavour — elegant TVG railways, the fast and sleek metro, the Louvre pyramid, the Bastille opera, nine refurbished city stadiums and a civic infrastructure that made the staging of the World Cup a triumph.

Now we are bidding for the cup in 2006. But what can we offer in comparison, in our present post-Tory state? Imagine the television eye of the world cast into the heart of our major cities as they are now, and wonder whether we might find ourselves cringing at some of the sights — or lack of them. What public services and well-kept public spaces have we to offer for global admiration? Not our seedy and chaotic railways, that's for sure. Not the London underground or public transport elsewhere, nor good roads to compensate (the French have both). Black rubbish bags are a dominant feature of the British urban landscape. True, the Lottery has scattered the country with new arts, museum and heritage projects, soon to open surprising fine sights in unexpected places. But these are no substitute for the things that only a well-funded state can do.

The French spend 50 per cent of GDP, we only spend 40 per cent — and everywhere in both countries that difference hits you in the eye. We have lost our own tradition of pride in collective spending for the public good. We lost it under the last Labour government: anyone watching Tuesday night's Channel 4 documentary on the 1979 winter of discontent will have been reminded how trust in government spending died among the unbureaucratic and hospital workers barring the doors to patients. It paved the way to 18 years of extolling everything private, denigration of everything public.

Two decades of civic neglect takes a lot of catching up — not just in infrastructure, but crucially in public attitudes. A generation reared on the mantra that all spending is sin needs to have its eyes opened to the good that wise public spending can do. So yesterday marked this Government's first giant step on the long road towards building that trust and enthusiasm. "Step by step making Britain better and stronger," said the Chancellor. Just so.

THIS is neither a socialist nor an instinctively radical Government — but it is progressive. It believes the state, well-managed, can get things done. It breathes confidence in its own ability to force efficiency and effectiveness out of every penny spent — and demonstrate it to an erstwhile disbelieving nation. Seeing is believing, and there's no doubt that in this first leap forward the emphasis is mainly on, to give due credit, not entirely on the most visible forms of spending — bright things for all to admire. The country must look and feel better. People must see the public sector not as the usual seedy, peeling fourth-rate worst, but as the best there is. Pride in public services will only come when a GP surgery or a bus across the city feels as modern and keen to please as a travel agent or restaurant.

That's why new and refurbished hospitals feature strongly, with a customer-friendly computerised appointment systems and quality league tables for all to read. In education, priority goes to renewing 6,000 school buildings fallen into shameful disrepair. How can pupils feel education is precious if any fast-food restaurant seems

better equipped? How can high-calibre people be persuaded to teach in premises no one has cared about for decades? If public transport is a disgrace, that's not surprising: it was cut by 25 per cent by the last government. Now it's to get 5 per cent more each year, with 150 integrated transport schemes nationwide.

But there is some bravery too. Not everything will be popular. Poor pensioners are deservedly big winners — up 13 per cent, with a new minimum pension guarantee. What that means is something that will not please Barbara Castle, but is the right thing to do. Expect all future money to be targeted on the poorest, with a new delivery system to make sure they get it, while the universal principle is progressively weakened. Talking child benefit from better-off 16-18-year-olds is brave but right, targeting the money on far bigger maintenance allowances for poor children staying on at school. (Wise, this will be piloted first to prove it works as an incentive to stay on.) And there is more money for overseas aid, hardly something there's a public clamour for.

As for social programmes, there has never been such a good package of projects designed to delve into the causes of poverty. Sure Start, echoing the old US Head Start programme, aims to catch all the 3-5-year-olds in the 250 most deprived areas, bringing mothers and toddlers from birth into a network of family centres offering health, emotional and early education help. A new deal for communities will offer human regeneration schemes, to match the existing (and extra) single regeneration budget programmes on the worst estates, creating public jobs and



Extra money is the only carrot that forces people to co-operate

training as part of rebuilding bad housing. OK, cynics may say they've seen it all before. Labour governments have tried these things in one form or another years ago. Some of us remember all kinds of optimistic acronym for long-term, semi-failed schemes. But this time the Government has set out with a fiercer determination than ever to tackle the fiendish problem of getting competing budgets on the ground to work together, instead of against one another. It would be remarkable if all these things worked everywhere. But this time Labour has a firmer grip over local authority and local health spending. Extra money is the only carrot that forces people to co-operate. This time these programmes will be tightly monitored and evaluated. If something doesn't work, they'll try something else. And again, and again, until it does.

Is it enough money? It's plenty to be going on with. It will make a huge difference to all those things the Government really cares about. And most important of all, the public will see all around them the fruits of that money. So if, by some miracle, we were to win the bid for the 2006 World Cup, there is every chance, (barring catastrophic recession), that we shall by then look a little more like France and a little less like the flaccid team left in the wake of Mrs Thatcher.

I thought I was just a barrister and Labour MP for Medway. Silly me

I am a toolbox

Robert Marshall-Andrews

I HAVE a contract. I got it last month. It was drafted by a minor literary genius in Labour Party Headquarters at Millbank Tower in order to regulate my activities as an MP between now and the next election. With a fine sense of metaphor, the contract refers to itself as a "toolbox". Now in 30 years as a lawyer dabbling at the edge of commercial jurisprudence I have never seen a contract which is also a toolbox. Intrigued, I read on and it all became clear, as you will see.

The point of this contract (which I was asked to sign at the top and bottom) was to ensure that I did certain things to my constituents in Medway. The most impressive was to visit 26,000 of them personally by the next election. I was suddenly gripped by a sense of enthu-

siasm. What a wonderful prospect for them and me! I read on, but quickly discerned an apparent flaw in this otherwise luminous and poetic document. It contained no instructions as to what I should do to the 26,000 citizens of Rochester and Chatham and the Hoo Peninsula. I searched for a hidden appendix. There was none. Then suddenly I had it. There was a code. It explained why this contract, this elegant piece of prose, was also called a "toolbox". It was not a metaphor for the contract, it was a metaphor for me. Armed with a toolbox or, more accurately, as a toolbox, I was to go to 26,000 of my constituents and offer them some small but useful service. Exactly what service would probably depend upon their requirements and needs. Mentally I rehearsed my role:

"Good morning, I am Robert Marshall-Andrews QC, your Labour Member of Parliament but I am also

a toolbox. No, please do not shut the door. Here is my Millbank identity card testifying that I am wholly qualified for this operation. "Of course you were in bed. That is only natural at 4.30am. But please appreciate that I have another 24,642 constituents to visit."

If I were mucking about in parliament I couldn't look at your U-bend, could I?

Most services, however small, take at least five minutes to complete to a high standard. No doubt you will appreciate that I need to start early. In fact I hardly start at all. It is a matter of continuous process. Yes, it is hard from time to time.

"However, I am also a trained vote-baiter, so food and sleep mean little to me."

cially hard to detect for the untrained eye. Compost? I happen to have a bag of high-nitrate horse-dung in the toolbox, well-rotted, brilliant for azaleas. Hedge clipping? Re-grouting? What? Pension? Your pension? Oh, come, what about all that nasty scale round the bath? "Oh very well, but this is very disappointing, really. I shall have to make a report. Perhaps you would sign... What? Pension? Your pension? No, I'm afraid that's a matter for parliament, you know, those johnnies up in Westminster. "No, no, I'm afraid you have got that quite wrong, but don't worry, it's a really common error. It's what we call the old politics. Just think for a moment: if I were up there mucking about in parliament I couldn't be in parliament now could I? And besides, it would be terribly irritating for the Government."

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Blood Or

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Brown's blockbuster

It's a stunning statement

GORDON BROWN appeared to have pulled off the impossible yesterday. He promised sharply increased spending on education and health of socialist proportions yet within a tight fiscal framework that would be the envy of any sound-money Tory. He is planning to raise education spending by an unexpectedly large 5.1 per cent a year over the next three years (in real terms) compared with an average of 1.4 per cent a year during the 18 years of the last government. It may look less impressive averaged over the whole of this parliament (including the first two years of near-freeze) but it is real money nevertheless. And it will have been achieved without any of the increases in income taxes which many critics said were needed.

Spending will be front-end loaded, starting at \$3 billion more next year leading to \$10 billion in the third year, creating what could be the country's first pre-electoral boom based on education spending as opposed to excessive consumption. No one can now doubt what Labour meant by "education, education, education" — even if teachers would be wise not to expect much of the surplus to spill over into higher wages. The Chancellor is planning a similar 4.7 per cent rise in health spending over the next three years compared with 2.5 per cent a year during the last parliament. Extra spending is being tied to performance so it doesn't leak out into what are regarded as less desirable objectives (including inflation-

busting pay settlements). What is more, this increase in spending is taking place against predictions — validated by the National Audit Office — of a steadily growing budget surplus totalling \$30 billion over the three years. In cash terms, this is bigger than the peak surpluses produced by an overheated economy at the end of the 1980s.

Where's the catch? The sharp increase in priority spending is at the cost of cut backs in such other sectors as defence, agriculture, trade and industry where the squeals won't be loud enough to be heard. This will achieve an overall growth in current spending (everything except capital expenditure) of 2.25 per cent a year, roughly in line with the hoped-for growth of the whole economy. This is unlikely to scare the City which will be very impressed by the looming budget surplus after so many years of deficit. Of course, these plans could fall apart if the economy slides into a recession during the next few years. This could happen if the succession of interest hikes, associated with the overvalued pound, turns the planned slowdown into something more sinister. Yesterday's improvement in inflation suggests the Bank of England may have erred in the direction of overkill. But the Treasury insists that these projections have been based on the expected slowdown in economic growth — flagged in the Budget — to 1.5 to 2 per cent next year and 2.25 to 2.75 per cent the following year.

There are two other potential weaknesses. Gordon Brown may be hard pushed to keep the lid on public sector pay, which is rising at only 2.5 per cent compared with 5.9 per cent in the private sector. It will take all the Chancellor's guile to target some extra resources into priority areas (such as scarce teachers) while preventing industrial unrest among other disgruntled public sector employees. Mr Brown's plans could also run

into trouble if hospitals, schools and other institutions fail to agree to the improved performance criteria the Chancellor is insisting on as a *quid pro quo* for extra cash. In that event, will he really withhold the money? We shall see. These reservations apart, Mr Brown has delivered an extremely impressive Comprehensive Spending Review which appears to fulfill nearly all of the high targets he set himself.

Even the most optimistic social policy experts were rubbing their eyes in disbelief yesterday at the Government's unexpected generosity. This month's promise from the Prime Minister at the 50th birthday party of the National Health Service for sustainable year on year real increases was fully realised. The 4.7 per cent real increase over each of the next three years in England will compensate for the squeeze over the last two years pulling up the average for this parliament to 3.7 per cent compared to the 2.5 per cent over the last parliament.

The extra money for education will mean more money for pre-school children, nursery school children and further education institutions which with sixth form colleges now account for 60 per cent of our 16- to 19-year-olds in education. The new money has come just in time with two-thirds of FE colleges in debt. It will also make it easier for ministers to meet their target in reducing class sizes in primary schools.

Almost equally important is the way the new increases will help the less well off. Further education will begin to address the Kennedy Committee's proposals for improving access to disadvantaged young people. A new joint health and education programme for families with children under three in need of support will be launched today. The expansion of nursery education will be targeted towards the less well off and the increase in school budgets will help them

deal with disaffected teenagers reducing the numbers at risk of social exclusion.

On both pensions and child benefits the Chancellor signalled his readiness to look after the poorest. There will be a minimum income guarantee, ensuring the two million poorest pensioners on income support get increases not just above prices but also earnings: \$2.5 billion in the next three years. And the Chancellor has rightly refused to drop his plan to introduce maintenance grants for poor sixth formers. The aim is to encourage children from low income families to stay on in education. There will be pilot schemes to test the effects of such grants. If they succeed, child benefit for children aged 16 and over will be redistributed from the better off to the poor.

There will be those in Old Labour who will undoubtedly criticise the Chancellor for daring to plan for a big budget surplus when there are still desperate needs to be fulfilled. But most people will be stunned by the deft way he is combining high spending in key areas with help for the poor and a budget surplus. Announcements like these often look different a day or two later when the documents have been studied more carefully. But if Treasury claims that there are no "smoking guns" turns out to be true, yesterday's statement could turn out to be a defining moment for New Labour — and for Gordon Brown as well.

A threat too far

Kicking human rights around

THREATENING to take away the ball has been given a new meaning by Washington in its row over the powers of a future International Criminal Court. Yesterday in Rome, where a UN conference on establish-

ing the court is trying to reach agreement, notes of a bizarre warning were being circulated. These purport to reflect a recent conversation between US Defence Secretary William Cohen and his German opposite number, Volker Rühe. Unless the Clinton administration has its way on the terms of the new court, Mr Cohen warned, Washington would have to reconsider its "commitment of forces to Europe".

There was a time when such a threat would have been greeted with cheers by those who regarded the US as heightening rather than lessening cold war tensions — not to mention the "other side". But in the psycho-culture of the post-cold war era, US military commitment to Europe is regarded as essential. This has been demonstrated in Bosnia and may yet again be shown in and around Kosovo. The East European countries clamouring to join Nato also seek the re-assurance of a US connection.

Washington rejects any formula which would give the new court global jurisdiction and allow it to try accused war criminals whether or not their home state consents. This is a miserable position to maintain, and it lines up the US with Iran, Syria and China. It means, for example, that Belgrade and the Bosnian Serbs could block indefinitely the prosecution for war crimes of Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic. It is hard to tell whether the US really believes that its forces in Europe might be accused of committing war crimes: if it does, that is another sort of problem. The usual excuse of congressional opposition is being cited. But if the US does opt out, then the court will be reduced to impotence. In an age that has bred Pol Pot, Saddam Hussein, and a host of other violators of human rights, the world's only superpower cannot just walk off the pitch. This is an ethical game which everyone must play.

Letters to the Editor

Why gentlemen prefer bald

CAN your anonymous source (four of truth, July 6) be suffering from a severe case of sour grapes when claiming ITV's new consumer series is "not doing very well"? The programme, *We Can Work It Out*, made by Yorkshire Television, has a list of journalistic scope to its credit. With audiences of more than eight million, its last two programmes have been in the TV Top 40 — a brilliant performance for a new factual show. Steve Anderson, Controller, News & Current Affairs, ITV.

CHRIS Bell's explanation of the supposed preference for blonde hair (Letters, July 13) doesn't stand up to scrutiny. Surely in "evolutionary terms", bald females ought to be having the most fun? Jim Buck, Sheffield.

I'm not the most obvious reason why gentlemen prefer blondes that they're easier to find in the dark? Elliott Bignell, Basel, Switzerland.

A CORRESPONDENT suggested Gay Pride on the Garvaghy Road (Letters, July 14). Surely the costumes wouldn't be the bizarre enough? Les Stennett, Preston.

THE Fifa official struck by the number of instances of players pulling each other's shirts in France (Fifa to collar shirt-pullers, July 13) could solve this problem by making the shirts tighter and the shorts shorter. Campaign for the return of shorter shorts. Susan Banton, London.

The Country Diary is on Page 10

Those other British isles

WHAT a shame the natives of these shores won't have reciprocal rights to settle on the "uninhabited" British Indian Ocean Territory (Last out-crops of empire brought into the fold, July 14). I quite fancy a tropical paradise on a dependent Territory where no one lives. Could we not use the islands for new homes instead of England's green belt?

Or is "uninhabited" a bit wide of the mark? There are quite a few web sites and telephone facilities on one of the islands, Diego Garcia. And I suppose that, for the Home Office to allow people to go to Diego Garcia, they'd have to evict the huge American naval base. But we wouldn't have to worry about the Ilois people, packed off to Mauritius in the 1960s and 70s by previous governments. They didn't want to go

so, eventually, in 1982, they were paid \$30 million compensation, partly to preclude them from returning. So that's all right then.

Naturally, I'd like to view the place before taking out a mortgage. What time is the next B-2 flight to the territory? David Pybus, Peterborough.

IT MAY well be that the winning argument for granting 100,000 new British passports was the fact that very few people would take on citizenship in the UK from British Dependent Territories.

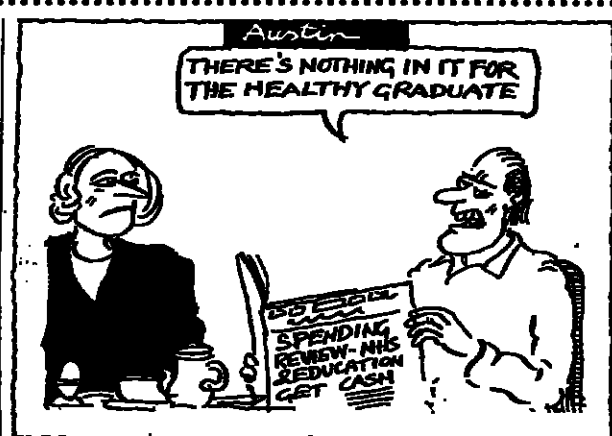
But the decision to grant passports is important and deeply symbolic, against the backdrop of strongly held views within the ethnic minority communities in the UK, that Gibraltar and the Falklands were treated so differ-

ently from other British Dependent Territories. The Government is to be congratulated for taking this important step when many of us believe that there has been so much unfairness over the years in British nationality policy. Claude Moraes, Director, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.

WHILE I agree in principle with giving full British citizenship to residents of the islands of the empire, I find it hard to accept that it will not be reciprocated. It appears we have gone from one form of apartheid to another. Not that I would like to live in the Atlantic Alcatraz of St Helena, but I would like to have the choice. Gregory Edelston, London.

AS A LESBIAN and a parent, I read the article with growing concern and anger. It implied that finding out that your son or daughter is gay is not only distressing but disastrous and inevitably traumatic. It was likened to coping with "a serious or terminal illness". It also implied that it means an absence of grandchildren. But many lesbians and gay men have children, and the same kind of life as any other family.

It is the heterosexist assumptions and expectations of many within our society that cause us difficulties, and reinforce prejudice. I was relieved that my daughter is as yet too young to pick up a paper and read it independently. I would not have wanted her to be subjected to newspaper coverage which implied many potentially damaging messages about our lives. Name and address supplied.



Mr Livingstone, you presumed

OH Mr Livingstone! The name of the election changes but the rhetoric stays the same (Letters, July 11). If you want it to be the members' choice, stop petronising us. Ken, and let us vote for whom we want — even if it is someone who wants, unlike you it seems, to work in partnership with the Government, rather than against it. Simon Jenkinson, University of East Anglia.

DESPITE what Liz Davies may say (Letters, July 11), Steve Bassam is right to argue that the Labour Party National Executive must re-

resent ordinary party members. The majority of Labour Party members want a Labour Government to live a long and successful life. Ms Davies and her cronies would sooner strangle it in infancy. Neither the hard left nor the old right should be allowed to gloat at the thought of inter-caste warfare which benefits no one but the Tories. I only hope we learn the bitter lessons of history. If that means leaving the old factions behind then so be it. Jacqueline Blunden, Dorset.

Not related

YOU are right about David Puttnam and about what he could have done for the BBC (Leader, July 14), but you are wrong about Gail Rebeck. Gail is not responsible for, or necessarily a part of, her husband's political connections. She is a brilliant business woman and manager, that's true, but her record of working with some of the most individual and creative publishing imprints and editors in the

business should make it clear that she's much else besides. Why does the BBC job because of her husband? Where is the line of thinking going? With a Guardian file on every talented wife in the land? Carmen Callil, London.

We do not publish letters where only an e-mail address is supplied; please include a full address. We may edit letters. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used.

Country goes to town to dispel sex and drugs image

LINDA Grant must have had a recent wet weekend in Cornwall with someone she didn't like (Kids in the countryside smoke a lot of dope and screw around because drugs and sex are all there is to do, July 14). Here in the south west, we have some of the best entertainment around in the summer. Big festivals like Glastonbury are well known but there are some other brilliant weekends on offer at Sidmouth and St Ives. If Grant went to Newquay, she would have found hoards of happy, healthy teenagers in the surf having "good, clean fun" and some pretty cool shops.

She does have a point that there are not the facilities to offer great variety to adolescents. There are fewer jobs on offer. It is often virtually impossible to get to an evening class at the local college. Public transport around here largely stops at 6.30pm. Because fewer people live here,

less money is available to provide anything for teenagers to do. Lottery funding favours urban areas. Local authorities in rural areas struggle to provide but the paucity of their population is not sufficiently recognised by Government funding formulas. Sue Miller, Yeovil, Somerset.

LINDA Grant's remarks do not add to the debate about rural deprivation. Stating the obvious — there is a drug problem in the countryside — does not qualify as journalism. Offering considered and practical solutions does. Ian Saltern, London.

SURELY city dwellers are guilty of "sleeping with their sisters" and have "quaint customs of animal abuse" too. Or would such a suggestion be insulting? Bernard Conning, Holywell Green, Halifax.

Adopt a Cub

and help WSPA save bears from cruelty.

Guler was found wandering the streets of Istanbul. Hunters probably shot her mother so Guler could be taught to "dance" for tourists. With her brother Erol, she's now safe at WSPA's bear sanctuary. You can help keep these cubs safe by adopting them as a gift. For £15 we'll send an adoption certificate, two photos of the cubs and their story. For £25 you'll get all these, plus a video of the cubs playing. Please help WSPA protect bears worldwide.

I want to adopt Erol and Guler
Please return this form to the address below.

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Your address _____
Postcode _____

Date of birth (if under 18) _____
If you are adopting a cub as a gift for a friend or a relation, and want their name on the certificate, please write their name here: _____

I want to adopt Erol and Guler for
☐ £15 (for an adoption certificate, 2 photos and the cubs' story)
☐ £25 (for all the above plus a video of the cubs)
Please make your cheque payable to WSPA or fill in your credit card details below.

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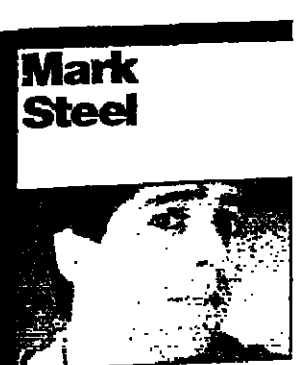
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Please send this completed form and your donation to: WSPA, Dept. AL598, 2 Langley Lane, London SW8 7TL. THANK YOU. Reg Charity No. 282598

OR CALL 0800 616 919 **WSPA**
Wild Society for the Protection of Animals

Blood Orange



THE way the Orange Order insist that they only want to uphold an annual "tradition" makes them sound like these people who go to the same bed and breakfast every year on holiday. Maybe it's true that on their parades they say to each other: "We've been coming here for 26 years, wouldn't dream of going anywhere else. And we always should abuse at the same family. Sick to what you like, I say."

The "tradition" argument is a weak attempt to obscure the only possible explanation for the marches: humiliation. How can the marches be an important part of the Protestant culture or religion? Was the reason that Henry VIII broke from Rome that he wanted to bang a huge drum while wearing a bowler hat, but the Pope wouldn't let him?

And the idea that it's the flamboyant banners and colours which make them an attraction is as daft as someone exclaiming their past be one evening by saying: "I wasn't interested in the politics. I just took part because the shirts were a soothing shade of brown."

Besides, if intimidation isn't the reason for marching, why is it so important that the route passes through Catholic areas? Unless the local Tourist Board brochure says: "The Garvaghy Road is best known for its wonderful panoramic views. From the

post box half way down you can enjoy a breathtaking landscape which goes from one end of Drumcree shopping centre to the other. Well worth a visit, even if for some reason you have to camp at one end for a fortnight before getting the chance."

Nor is it a celebration of "community", as if the parades are like a village fete. Unless they're advertised with posters in the local pub, saying "Come to Ye Olde King Billy Fayre. Knock a Catholic out of their home and win a goldfish. Three goes a pound. Delicious scones baked by Mrs Paisley."

But the Orange Order's desire to humiliate isn't just a result of bigoted madness. It's been cultivated for 200 years by the British. For example, Tory leader Bonar Law told Unionists in 1912: "There is no length of resistance to which Ulster can go in which I would not be prepared to support you". In 1821 the Orange Order was granted con-

trol of the new Northern Ireland.

Between then and 1969 there were only three Northern Irish cabinet ministers who were not members of the Orange Order. By 1943, 597 out of 634 civil servants were members. How did they manage that? Perhaps the advert for Civil Service posts said: "Applicants should have some knowledge of fillet and typing, and will require experience in walking and drum-banging at the same time."

Though they can't have got much work done, as the 597 probably spent most of their day stomping over the desks of the other 37 and tipping up their stationery.

THE Orange Order play had a logic. While the Order could secure a job and a council flat, most Protestants felt they had an interest in supporting their Unionist leaders. Workers would march alongside their managers in displays of

cross-class camaraderie. The result was that strikes were a third as likely as in Britain, and the Northern Ireland TUC wasn't recognised until 1964.

The civil rights campaign, direct rule and the decline in industry have diminished the power of the Orange Order, who have just one thing left to remind them of their past glory: the marches. So the most Protestants supported the peace deal, 94 per cent of the Orange Order opposed it. So peace depends on getting the majority of Protestants who now distrust the Orange Order to openly oppose it.

Next year the Parades Commission could help this process by taking into consideration the Orange Order's fondness for staying out all night in sleeping bags, and rerouting their parades to Glastonbury. After a day or two they might come up with:

We saw 10,000 hippies
Gaze them all a shoe
So now 10,000 hippies
Are lying in the mud.

And this is the culture that's worth celebrating with thousands of marches, even if you have to camp out for a week or two to start with.

Which is why pleas for nationalists to "learn to live with" the marches are misguided. Learning to live with the Orange Order is very different from learning to live with Protestants. Whereas the most Protestants supported the peace deal, 94 per cent of the Orange Order opposed it. So peace depends on getting the majority of Protestants who now distrust the Orange Order to openly oppose it.

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Lord Boyd-Carpenter

Courtesies of the House

THE HOUSE of Commons likes its gladiators. In the 1950s, it was well served by Richard Crossman for Labour and for the Conservatives by John Boyd-Carpenter, who has died aged 90. Both had sharp minds and a taste for controversy. They battled over the pensions legislation introduced by Boyd-Carpenter. Together they elevated the subject into high political drama. The Guardian's Norman Shrapnel, arguably the most acute commentator of his day, judged Boyd-Carpenter as "word perfect, aggressively courteous".

Throughout his 27 years in the Commons — on back or frontbench, in government or opposition — he maintained these qualities. To Crossman, the liberal leader, thought it was a fine exposition of Oxford oratory. That was a mild description of a pugnacious debater; nonetheless, Boyd-Carpenter did not bear grudges and accepted the disappointment of politics without sulks.

He was born to a political family, his father having served in the Commons, later representing Coventry, and his grandfather having been a distinguished MP for Ripon. Education at Stowe was followed by Balliol College, Oxford, and eventually the Middle Temple in 1934. He had shown an early appetite for politics, becoming president of the Oxford Union and a luckless candidate for the Commons constituency of the London County Council.

He had barely begun his legal career before the onset of the second world war. Enlistment in the Scots Guards was followed by service in the legal branch of the Allied military government in Italy. He had the daunting task of dispensing justice, including capital punishment; it was a task he carried out with a sense of duty. He left the Army to fight the 1945 general election in Kingston-upon-Thames, a seat that he served conscientiously until 1952.

The post-war parliament was tailored for Boyd-Carpenter. The general election had decimated Tory ranks and many survivors were elderly and disinclined for hand-to-hand battle. The new member for Kingston was determined to fight aggressively and use every procedural tactic. He helped create a disciplined and successful opposition which culminated in the determined, and almost legendary, battle over gas nationalisation.

In 1951 Churchill made Boyd-Carpenter financial secretary to the Treasury, a congenial step on the ministerial ladder. He much admired his Chancellor, R. A. (Rab) Butler, and approved of the policy of restrained public spending and cuts in direct taxation. He enjoyed battling over the minutiae of policy and the rule of Treasury executioners, ruefully observing: "No one can apply the axe to public spending without suffering." Years later, he was to compare the Rab chancellorship with the early Thatcher years.

In 1954 Boyd-Carpenter was promoted to minister of transport and civil aviation. Although he held this office relatively briefly, he was able to announce the planned motorway programme in February, 1955. It is customary to judge Boyd-Carpenter as on the Tory right in many instances that view was true, but he was agnostic rather than radical in matters such as public ownership — as his handling of the transport industries and the nationalised British road services demonstrated.

In 1955, Boyd-Carpenter became minister of pensions and national insurance, a post he held for seven years. He had doubts about Anthony Eden, now his prime minister, which initially related to domestic politics and his judgment of economic and

social affairs. This concern soon embraced foreign affairs. Eden's supposed speciality, Boyd-Carpenter was strongly opposed to the Suez venture from a liberal viewpoint — and seriously considered resigning.

Happily he decided otherwise, and concentrated on a major reform of national insurance retirement pensions, which proved to be greatly significant, not so much for its immediate impact as for the principle it established, and the political consensus it eventually provided.

Boyd-Carpenter decided to end the Beveridge flat-rate contribution/benefit principle and to have a wage-related contribution and benefit. This in turn encouraged the growth of private sector pensions and, with tax incentives, stimulated a growth in occupational pension schemes that gave Britain an advantage over her continental partners, whose pensions were dominated by taxpayer finance. The debate was argued ahead of the 1959 general election with Boyd-Carpenter and Crossman as well-matched adversaries. The former's mastery of detail and nose for politics enabled the Conservatives to take and hold the initiative in this aspect of social policy.

Boyd-Carpenter was a beneficiary of Macmillan's major Cabinet reshuffle in the summer of 1962. He entered the Cabinet as Chief Secretary to the Treasury, although it seems extraordinary that he had been taking major decisions for so long as a non-Cabinet minister. His Chancellor,

Boyd-Carpenter was a pugnacious debater; he did not bear grudges and accepted the disappointments of politics without sulks. As a minister and a committee chairman, he contributed personal charm coupled with incisive judgment

Reginald Maudling, had the remit of relaxing the policy of his predecessor, Selwyn Lloyd. This it is hardly surprising that Boyd-Carpenter was not a reincarnation of the financial secretary that had served Rab a decade earlier.

Maudling was a congenial and worldly companion. They argued whether the income tax reductions should fall on allowances or rates. Boyd-Carpenter favouring the latter. By contrast, Boyd-Carpenter found Edward Heath unbending, and believed his intransigence over the abolition of retail price maintenance was a crucial vote-losing in the 1964 general election. This difference of opinion and of temperament was to count against him when Heath became party leader.

After the 1964 general election defeat, Boyd-Carpenter was shadow housing spokesman, marking the ministerial office now held by his old adversary, Crossman. It was a short-lived affair. After the 1966 election, Heath — now Conservative leader — retired him to the backbenches, where he remained for the rest of his Commons life. He bore disappointment with great philosophy, but it was a harsh blow.

However, Boyd-Carpenter

showed himself to be a superb gaffer in the 1966 parliament. Many Tories were irked that his talents were confined to the backbenches, and from within the 1922 Committee there were appeals that he should be installed as shadow leader of the House. Such requests were in vain, but all was not lost. The freedom of the backbenches enabled him to become one of those who scuppered the Wilson plan to reform the House of Lords.

This demolition task is usually credited to Michael Foot and Enoch Powell. They certainly played a major and romantic role, but it was never a two-man band. Boyd-Carpenter and Robert Sheldon used their procedural skills to great effect, and the former would have gained satisfaction by frustrating the then leader of the House, his old sparring partner Richard Crossman.

At this time, Boyd-Carpenter was also confirming the reputation of the public and private accounts committee, then handling aircraft procurement and higher education, some of the most delicate matters of public spending. As chairman, he contributed personal charm coupled with incisive and political judgment. With such distinguished auditors-general as Sir Edmund Compton and Sir Bruce Fraser, he added to the authority of the committee and its support for the House of Commons.

It was a quality that did not secure for him the reputation of a generation of engineers who actually sat down and designed aeroplanes. Today's aircraft are visualised, designed, drawn and even flight-tested with computers before a piece of metal is cut. When Lickley went into aircraft design in 1933, powered flight was less than 25 years old and designing aeroplanes on the backs of envelopes was probably not far off the truth.

Lickley joined Hawker Aircraft under the tutelage of its chief designer Sydney Camm in 1933. There he was to be responsible for some of the most innovative and ingenious British aircraft designs ever built.

Lickley was educated at Dundee High School and Edinburgh University, where he took first-class honours in civil engineering. In London he attended aeronautical engineering lectures by Harold Gougeon (later Lord King's Norton) at Imperial College and soon afterwards joined Hawker at Kingston-upon-Thames as a stressman.

Sydney Camm was then making the first drawings of a monoplane version of the beautiful Hawker Fury biplane. Lickley started on this project but Camm soon set

him to work with the assistant chief designer, Roy Chaplin, on a completely new monoplane with a "thick-wing" capable of accommodating eight Browning .303 machine guns. This would give it a superior firepower to any rival American or German fighter.

The design became the Hurricane and the first production aircraft reached 111 Squadron at RAF Northolt in the summer of 1939. By then Lickley was chief project engineer and under his aegis Hawker turned out some of the second world war's most famous fighter and ground-attack aircraft, including the Typhoon, which destroyed German lines of communication after the Normandy landings, and the Tempest, which was the main weapon against the V-1 flying bomb.

In 1946 Lickley joined the Cranfield College of Aeronautics. There he established the first postgraduate department in Europe, and possibly the world, teaching aircraft design. Six years later he joined Fairey Aviation as chief engineer, where his first responsibility was to develop an airborne, early warning version of the Gannet anti-submarine aircraft. Fairey was also working on a 60-degree delta-wing, supersonic design, the Fairey Delta 2, and Lickley

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Reach for the sky... Lickley worked on the supersonic Fairey Delta FD2 with the 'droop snoot' nose later used on Concorde. QUADRANT PICTURE LIBRARY

Sir Robert Lickley

The perfection of aircraft

SIR ROBERT Lickley, who has died aged 86, was probably the last of a generation of engineers who actually sat down and designed aeroplanes. Today's aircraft are visualised, designed, drawn and even flight-tested with computers before a piece of metal is cut. When Lickley went into aircraft design in 1933, powered flight was less than 25 years old and designing aeroplanes on the backs of envelopes was probably not far off the truth.

Lickley joined Hawker Aircraft under the tutelage of its chief designer Sydney Camm in 1933. There he was to be responsible for some of the most innovative and ingenious British aircraft designs ever built.

Lickley was educated at Dundee High School and Edinburgh University, where he took first-class honours in civil engineering. In London he attended aeronautical engineering lectures by Harold Gougeon (later Lord King's Norton) at Imperial College and soon afterwards joined Hawker at Kingston-upon-Thames as a stressman.

Sydney Camm was then making the first drawings of a monoplane version of the beautiful Hawker Fury biplane. Lickley started on this project but Camm soon set

him to work with the assistant chief designer, Roy Chaplin, on a completely new monoplane with a "thick-wing" capable of accommodating eight Browning .303 machine guns. This would give it a superior firepower to any rival American or German fighter.

The design became the Hurricane and the first production aircraft reached 111 Squadron at RAF Northolt in the summer of 1939. By then Lickley was chief project engineer and under his aegis Hawker turned out some of the second world war's most famous fighter and ground-attack aircraft, including the Typhoon, which destroyed German lines of communication after the Normandy landings, and the Tempest, which was the main weapon against the V-1 flying bomb.

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soon took over the project, which embodied the "droop snoot" nose to provide the pilot with a better view while landing — a feature later used on Concorde.

The FD2's fuselage and power plant were incorporated in the BAC Type 221 research aircraft, used to develop the supersonic airliner's wing form. On March 10, 1966 the FD2 became the first aircraft to set the world speed record above 1,000 mph, when Peter Twiss broke the American record by a margin of 310 mph, at an average of 1,132 mph.

During the 1960s Lickley led a team with a range of projects inconceivable today. Apart from the Gannet and the FD2 he had responsibility for the Army's Ultra Light jet

helicopter, the Fireflash air-to-air guided weapon, an anti-tank guided weapon, a fighter version of the FD2, and the Rotodyne, a prototype 48-seat vertical take-off and landing aircraft which first flew in 1957. Described as a helicopter, it was correctly known as a "convertiplane", powered by wing-mounted twin propeller turbines which pushed compressed air through the hollow rotor blades to tiny pressure jets at the rotor tips. These were derived from German wartime designs and a key Austrian engineer on forced labour for Hitler subsequently worked for Lickley.

In the same year as the Rotodyne's first flight, the government published its notorious defence white paper, which foresaw a British aircraft industry made up of no more than two fixed-wing aircraft companies and one helicopter company. Lickley became a director of a nuclear engineering consortium involving Fairey and managing director of Fairey Aviation, which was formed to oversee the company's aircraft and helicopter interests.

In 1960 this company was absorbed, at the government's behest, into Westland Helicopters and Lickley went back to Hawker Siddeley Aviation, where he was again intimately involved with the de-

velopment of a revolutionary aeroplane, the Hawker Siddeley vertical take-off jet, which played a crucial role in the Falklands war and is still in service. Lickley also took a leading role in its sale to the United States.

In 1976 he left Hawker Siddeley and joined the National Enterprise Board with responsibility for Rolls-Royce in the wake of the RB211 jet engine financial crisis. His work did much to assure the company's long-term future. He received many honours, was appointed CBE in 1973, KB in 1984 and was awarded the Royal Aeronautical Society's Gold Medal. He played a leading role in the work of the Science and Engineering Research Council.

Sir Robert Lickley was a perfectionist. Working for and with him could be a pleasure and was always a privilege. His tongue had a sharp edge if he was not convinced you knew your job, but he was also one of the kindest and most loyal friends one could have. He leaves a son and three grandchildren. His devoted wife Doris died in 1997.

Derek Thurgood

Robert Lang Lickley, aeronautical engineer, born January 19, 1912; died July 7, 1998



Lickley... planemaker

The Rev Raymond George

Glad tidings to all men

A CROSS 60 years, the contribution to theological education of the internationally renowned ecumenist and liturgical Raymond George, who has died aged 85, was incomparable. And his association with the Methodist Church's faith and order commission — which advises the Methodist Conference on doctrine, worship and ecumenism — lasted almost as long as his educational involvement.

He served on the committee from 1950 until 1975, when he became president of the conference of the World Council of Churches, Oxford, as saying: "We have not had a Welshman at Corpus for 10 years" and that schools like Olchfa, in Swansea, did not raise pupils to the standards at which the college would accept them. Sir Keith has asked us to say that he has never said anything of the kind. He says there has been a steady stream of excellent entrants to Corpus from Wales, and that he wholly repudiates the remarks falsely attributed to him. The remarks to which he objects appear to have arisen out of a misunderstanding which we regret.

John Biffen

John Archibald Boyd-Carpenter, politician, born June 2, 1908; died July 11, 1998

studying in Marburg, in Germany, from 1937 to 1939, he taught at Handsworth College, Birmingham, and then Hartley Victoria College, Manchester. After a brief period as a circuit designer, he joined the Royal Air Force in 1940. In 1946, he became principal in 1961, and left to become acting head of Leeds University's theology department from 1967 to 1968.

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Birthdays

Prof Sir James Ball, economist, 65; Sir Harrison Birtwistle, composer, 64; Julian Bream, guitarist, 65; Geoffrey Burgon, composer, 87; Prof Jocelyn Bell Burnell, astronomer, physicist, 55; Rosemary Butler, director of statistics, Dept of Health, 52; Carmen Calli, publisher, 60; John Denham, Labour MP, 45; Trevor Horn, record producer, 49; Ann Jellicoe, playwright, 71; Kate Kellaway, literary critic, 41.

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Boyd-Carpenter... a sharp mind and a taste for controversy. KENNETH SAUNDERS

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Analysis Teaching languages

Parlez-vous français?

Tony Blair does. But Britain is notoriously monoglot. And all the signs are that the nation is on the verge of suffering in economic, political and cultural terms. **John Carvel** wonders whether a counter initiative being launched this week by Trevor McDonald for the Nuffield Foundation is too little, too late



Labour's
Mr Modern

WHEN Tony Blair addressed the French parliament in March, it wasn't so much what he said as the language in which he said it. Our national reputation for monoglot aloofness torn apart, he even cracked jokes in good French. We now know his suspicions about socialism developed during a youthful stint as a waiter in Paris when he discovered he was the only member of staff naive enough to follow an instruction that all the tips should be put in a common pot.

His performance made news because it was so unusual. The rule is that the British are not as good as other Europeans at learning foreign languages. Perhaps British linguistic deficiency is a relic of empire or a symptom of insularity. But it may be a pragmatic response to the willingness of the rest of the world to learn English; if they take the trouble to make it possible for us to communicate in our own language, why bother learning theirs? The counter argument, from industrialists, is that this indolence may become a cost in an increasingly globalised economy.

This week the Nuffield Foundation is launching an inquiry into our language capability chaired by Trevor McDonald, the ITV newscaster. "It is questionable," says the launch document, "whether our present capability in languages is sufficient to sustain us in economic, political, strategic, social and cultural terms, and whether our readiness to continue to rely on others learning our language will not leave us in a position of disadvantage in our personal, social and business contacts. We are apt to forget that speakers of other languages are not learning English for our benefit" (1).

Companies, it's said, continue to lose orders through lack of language skills, often at the level of telephone switchboards whose operators do not understand enough to put through the calls. In spite of government initiatives such as the annual Language For Export awards, Britain is second from bottom of the league of European companies with executives able to negotiate in a foreign language. When receivers

checked through the files of one British company that went into liquidation, they found an order in German that could have saved it from bankruptcy had any of the staff been able to understand it (2).

"Employers are turning increasingly to nationals of other countries when recruiting staff, especially in areas such as international transport, hotels, tourism and retailing. Multinationals are bringing in increasing numbers of staff from partner countries to fill key posts in this country" (3).

One of the inquiry's first tasks will be to establish the scale of the problem. The Government's drive to improve standards of maths in schools is motivated by extensive international research showing that British children are performing relatively badly in tests of basic numeracy (4).

A parallel programme to improve literacy was prompted by evidence that only 60 per cent of 11-year-olds were achieving the expected national standard. But there are no hard data about linguistic competence. Over the past decade an effort has been made to improve language learning. Scotland pioneered a national scheme starting at primary level and England phased in a national curriculum requiring that all pupils are taught a foreign language from 11 to 16. On average English pupils get 130 minutes of language lessons a week over five school years, compared to 150 minutes a week for eight years in the Netherlands and 180 minutes for nine years in France (see graphic). That does not suggest we are yet giving language the priority seen in other parts of Europe.

THE languages curriculum did not become compulsory for 15-year-olds in England until September 1996 when this year's GCSE candidates were starting their courses. Their results will not be published until next month, but most schools implemented the policy earlier and there has been a steady increase in GCSE entries. As the graphic shows, French, German and Spanish numbers are up. These three account for 95 per cent of GCSE entries. There has also been a steady growth in Ital-

ian, Russian and Urdu, but from a much smaller base. Such figures might suggest that changes in the monoglot culture have already been engineered, but it is not producing recruits for advanced study. Look at the figures for A level. Meanwhile the take up for General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) languages has been poor. Although tourism is now one of Britain's biggest service industries and 70 per cent of tourists come from non-English speaking countries, few candidates for the GNVQ in leisure and tourism bother with the languages option.

LID KING, director of the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CILT), says decline in English A levels and Scottish Highers may be caused by the rigour of the exams. One result is that there are not enough students in a fit state to begin the growing number of combined degree courses being offered by the universities, linking a foreign language to other subjects. Students are crowding into crash remedial courses to acquire the language skills they should have gained earlier.

The good news about combined courses is that they do appear to be turning out more scientists, engineers and other specialists with the language skills needed for the international marketplace. The bad news is that numbers starting a straight foreign languages degree have fallen, from 10,633 in 1994/5 to 9,943 last year (5). Universities cannot fill the teacher training quotas set by the Teacher Training Agency for specialist language teachers. And secondary schools are finding it hard to fill their staff vacancies.

But does this lack of linguistic capability matter in a world where English has become the dominant language of business and international relations? In a recent yearbook of European organisations, 99 per cent cited English as a working language as opposed to 63 per cent

French and 40 per cent German. At a world level it has been estimated that 85 per cent of international organisations use English, 45 per cent French and fewer than 10 per cent Arabic, Spanish or German. English is the world's second language of choice in politics, finance, science and — buoyed up by the power of Hollywood — in popular culture. The Internet Society has reported that 84.3 per cent of

world-wide web home pages are in English, with no other language topping 5 per cent. There are signs, however, that this powerful linguistic monopoly will not survive the end of the 20th century. Papers prepared for the Nuffield inquiry suggest that the proportion of Internet material in English will fall to about 40 per cent in the next decade as users are given more choice of language. The rich countries are ageing. Young adults with disposable income will increasingly be found in Asia and Latin America where trade and communications between neighbours may become more important than exchanges with the United States and Europe.

Last year a British Council study argued that the monopoly position of English will give way to an oligopoly of several languages (6). The author of the report, David Graddol, said: "We are moving to a stage quite soon in which the world will be saturated with English. Every area will have it as a second language and the countries with

a competitive edge will be those that have another world language as well... If Britain says resolutely monolingual, competitors will thrive by having the language of the market into which they are selling. So there is an even more pressing need for British children to be learning languages for a multilingual future. Otherwise we will be left behind."

AN example of the trend can be seen in the rapid growth of call centres providing helplines for companies' international clients. Many are located in Britain because of the efficiency of telecommunications and the strength of English as a world language. But companies wanting to improve their service need to offer multilingual call centres. As other countries improve their telecoms, they might be better placed to take over a business that could become one of the biggest sources of employment.

There can be no precise forecast of the world map of second languages, but the chances are that Mandarin, Russian and Spanish will among the oligopolists. These are not the tongues that

feature much in British classrooms. But language teachers argue that children can never waste their time by learning the wrong language. "You can't ask schools to predict the particular languages that everybody is going to need, but you can provide an education that helps pupils to become culturally open and linguistically capable. The ability to learn one language enhances the capability to learn others," says Lid King of CILT.

As the inquiry begins its work, Trevor McDonald has no doubt that the next generation of foreign correspondents will need more language skills than he ever had. "I came to feel travelling round as a reporter that it is ever so slightly arrogant to walk into a place and assume that everybody else would do it your way. The lack of more people in our profession who spoke languages was a disadvantage. "My son Jack is nine. I keep drumming into his head that, in the world of tomorrow, competence in languages is probably going to be the passport to any job in the European Community in which we live. That isn't pro- or anti-Europe. There

are certain forces that are ineluctable... Inability to speak the languages of the community will render people at a great disadvantage."

Sources: (1) Nuffield Languages Inquiry, PO Box 2671, London W1A 3SH; 0171-911-5054; secretary Alan Moys; (2) Languages in European Business, edited by Stephen Hagan, City Technology Colleges Trust and Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, 1993; (3) Language Strategy Working Group, Nuffield Foundation; (4) Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), National Foundation for Educational Research, 1997; (5) Higher Education Statistics Agency, Student Data Return December 1997; (6) The Future of English, David Graddol, British Council 1997.

Graphics Sources: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research; European Commission. Graphics: Steve Villiers; Michael Agar. Research: Matthew Keating. John Carvel is the Guardian's education editor.



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FinanceGuardian

Inflation figures rally City

Markets act as if rate rises are over

Mark Atkinson
Economics Correspondent

THE Government's inflation target was back in sight yesterday after lower housing costs and a reversal in seasonal food prices helped shave almost half a percentage point off the rise in the cost of living.

With the effects of last year's Budget increases in fuel duties dropping out of the retail index in July and weak retail sales pointing to heavy discounting in the summer sales, there was optimism that the 2.5 per cent target could be hit within the next few months.

However, analysts were cautious to call a peak in base rates, currently 7.5 per cent, until there were clear signs of a deceleration in wage costs and a decisive slowdown in consumer demand.

"Clearer data is needed that domestic cost pressures are easing for risks of a further base-rate hike to fade," said Michael Saunders of Salomon Smith Barney, the American investment bank.

According to figures published by the Office for National Statistics, headline inflation fell from an annual rate of 4.2 per cent in May to 3.7 per cent in June. The target underlying rate, excluding mortgage interest payments, eased to 2.6 per

cent from 3.2 per cent. The decreases in both rates were larger than anticipated in the City, and prompted a rally in share prices and a fall in the value of the pound, which closed at £1.83 to the dollar as traders bet against another rate rise.

The ONS said that the largest downward effect was exerted by housing costs, which rose by less than last year's when mortgage repayments were boosted by higher lending rates, in turn prompted by base-rate increases in both May and June.

Almost as important was a partial reversal of May's rise in seasonal food prices caused by April's poor weather.

A resumption in supplies of fresh fruit and vegetables drove seasonal prices down by 3.2 per cent between May and June, with the price of strawberries falling particularly sharply, by 24 per cent.

The ONS said that weak demand for salads and fruit, due to the unseasonably cold and

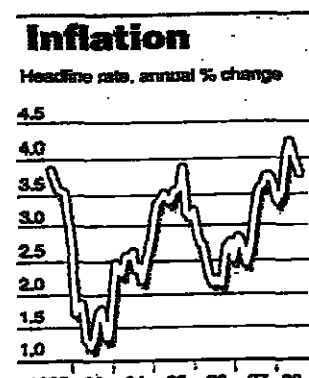


Strawberry prices fell by 24 per cent from May to June

wet weather last month, may also have played a part in cutting prices of seasonal food.

The third factor helping to keep the rate of price increases down was lower import costs — especially secondhand car prices, which are being depressed by good deals on new models.

Smaller downward effects



Strawberry prices fell by 24 per cent from May to June

came from prices for alcohol, household and leisure goods.

There were offsetting, upward effects on the index from prices on personal goods and services — although the ONS said these were negligible. It also pointed out that June's survey of prices had been conducted on June 16, and had therefore not picked

up the full effects of discounting in the summer sales.

These could be large, given the weakness of demand highlighted by Tuesday's British Retail Consortium Survey.

Jonathan Loynes, UK economist at HSBC, cautioned that the figures, while encouraging for the view that base rates had peaked, revealed a continued split between low goods inflation, at 0.3 per cent, and high — 3.2 per cent — services inflation.

He said the Bank of England's monetary policy committee was likely to place more emphasis on forward-looking inflation indicators, such as activity and earnings, than on yesterday's figures.

"But we know from experience that the Bank of England's forecasts of where inflation will go are influenced by where it has been, and — if nothing else — these numbers provide a more favourable starting-point for the August inflation report than we had expected."

Notebook

Brown gamble is in with a chance



Alex Brummer

IN BROAD economic terms there could not be a better launchpad for the real Labour government of manifesto promises to begin. The hard work of improving the credibility of monetary policy has been improved with an independent Bank of England which is, slowly and surely, starting to deliver a better inflation outlook.

Taxation decisions already taken, together with tough ceilings on public spending which will come off next spring, have helped to restore the national finances to balance and even surplus. And with the economy slowing rapidly there is perhaps no better point in the economic cycle than to provide some fiscal stimulus to pick up some of the slack left by a slowing industrial sector.

The lines of attack on what the government is doing were plain to see even before opposition spokesman Francis Maude was on his feet.

The critics say three things...

The government is failing to deliver on its promise to switch spending from social security budgets to health and education... It is storing up for itself enormous trouble if its sets in stone over-generous public spending commitments and then finds itself confronted by recession... The financial markets will take enormous fright at the headline increases in education and health spending, which present an image of prodigality.

EACH of these perceived shortcomings needs to be examined. It was always going to be impossible to cut the absolute levels of social security benefits, which include basic rights like state pensions and income support for the less well off. The task of ratcheting this down was always going to be difficult although welfare-to-work, the new deal for unemployed youth and tackling social security reform (every government promises that) will help in keeping real increases down.

In fact, cash for health and education will be largely found from much meaner settlements elsewhere in the public spending forest, including agriculture and defence where there will be real cuts in spending. Other spending will be bolted down, with the small but important exception of overseas aid.

The biggest risk for Chancellor Brown in the spending review is the economy. The Treasury forecasts, as outlined in the fiscal strategy report in June, are for a growth slowdown this year to 1.75 per cent picking up to 2 per cent in 1999-2000 and 2.25 per cent beyond.

It is continued growth, rather than lurch into recession.

sion, which rapidly transforms the public finances which is essential to Labour's blueprint. By all accounts it has the domestic bases covered. The Bank of England and the City appear to have no direct worries about the broad shape of the public spending settlement.

Moreover, the latest figures showing the headline rate and underlying rate of inflation tumbling could well mean that the monetary policy committee will be more comfortable holding off on interest rate increases.

The big uncertainties are global. Just how serious they are is evidenced by the IMF's new report on the US economy, which argues that current interest rates are "appropriate" in view of the Asian crisis. The IMF has begun revising down all growth forecasts to take account of the failure of any recovery to emerge in East Asia and the uncertainty about a Japanese recovery.

THERE is a global shoring up process taking place from Russia to East Asia, with Japan right at the core of attention until a new government is in place. There has been a consistent underestimating of the scale of the Asian problem and that could yet jeopardise the government's attempt to institute a steady and predictable three-year process of managing public spending.

When there is recession the public finances are hit by a triple whammy — through reduced revenues, increased transfer payments like unemployment and higher interest charges on the national debt as borrowing spirals out of control.

The spending plans, particularly those for upgrading the nation's health, education and transport infrastructure, will offset some of the recessionary impulses.

The headline figures for increases in health and education should not be taken at face value by the markets. In the case, for instance, of health the Chancellor spoke of a 5.1 per cent increase in spending, but that is measured in cash rather than real terms. The actual increase over the Parliament (taking account of the two cash ceiling years at the start) will be a generous, but less alarming 3.8 per cent. Better than the 3 per cent in the last Parliament, but not wildly prodigal. Particularly when one considers that the nation's vigour and education are investments in long-term future.

The key to bringing in public sector borrowing on target, with surpluses projected for each of the next three years, will be cost-cutting tough regime inside government departments, and no recession.

Mr Brown has already demonstrated his readiness to play the iron Chancellor if spending principles are breached. The rest is down to global conditions and the Bank of England, neither of which he can control.

It is a more risky settlement than the City might have preferred. But if earnings and prices subside there is a reasonable chance of succeeding.

Black women take pole position on pay

Charlotte Denney

BLACK women have overtaken both black men and white women in the pay stakes, according to new research published today.

Workers from ethnic minorities tend to get paid less than their white counterparts, even taking into account educational qualifications. But black women have managed to buck the trend, according to figures published by the Employment Policy Institute.

Taking figures for 1997, the independent jobs think tank found that black women earned on average £5.10 an hour, compared to £5.19 an hour for white women and £5.85 for black men. Their earnings advantage shows up at both the top and bottom end of the labour market.

Despite the relatively good position of black women, the report shows that overall ethnic minorities lose out in the labour market. They are less likely to be employed than white people and, apart from Indian men and Black women, workers from ethnic minorities earn less than their white counterparts.

The situation is worst for Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups who are four times as likely to be unemployed and earn on average £2.00 an hour less than whites.

Presenting the report, Paul Gregg, of the Centre for Economic Performance, said it was unclear why black women were doing so well. "Racism in the labour market is a lot about fear. It could be that black women are seen as less threatening," he said.

The report also shows how the North-South gap in job opportunities has narrowed as the economy has swung out of recession since 1993. Unemployment



Bucking the trend... Black women have overtaken both black men and white women in the pay stakes, according to Employment Policy Institute figures. PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ANGLIS

is still high in inner cities, seaside towns and former industrial centres, where there are up to five jobseekers for every vacancy.

But the blackspots coexist with booming areas and are no longer concentrated

in the north. Despite the dramatic fall in unemployment, only 6 per cent of the country enjoyed full employment, defined as having a vacancy for every jobseeker.

The "boom areas" cover a

belt of semi-urban Britain running from the Home Counties to the Welsh borders, through to Cheshire, Lancashire and North Yorkshire, plus parts of Scotland outside the Strathclyde area.

Plans to sell the Tote left in starting stalls

Don Atkinson

PROPOSALS to privatise the Tote appear to have been put on the back burner, with fears for the future of horseracing outweighing the £500 million that could be raised by a sale.

Home Secretary Jack Straw said yesterday that his Tote review team — to report by the end of the year — will look only at the "possibility of a broader partnership between the... [Tote] and the private sector".

The team — which will be headed by the Tote chairman, Peter Jones, himself — will have to take into account "the health of horseracing". The Tote's contribution to the industry, currently in excess of £10 million a year, would be threatened were it to be sold outright to a private operator.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, raised the issue of the Tote's future on June 11, when he told MPs he was considering a sell-off, alongside the sale of Air Traffic Control and the Royal Mint, in a cash-raising exercise.

Suggestions that the Treasury was looking at selling 51 per cent of the Tote to the private sector were not denied, and earlier this month, it emerged that Japanese bank Nomura was considering a bid for the 70-year-old organisation. Camelot, the lottery operator, has also signalled an interest.

But it seems the fragile

state of the horseracing industry may have influenced a slow-down in the sale process. Mr Straw said yesterday: "This is not a matter of moving straight to privatisation. That will clearly be one possible option, but we expect to look at a range of possibilities and nothing is ruled out at this stage."

The Home Office confirmed yesterday that the British Horseracing Board — the industry body that has drawn up its own plan to revive racing — was "in constant contact" with officials, adding that the responsible junior Home Office minister, George Howarth, had recently held a get-to-know-you meeting with board chairman Peter Savill.

Mr Straw said yesterday that references to the Tote in Mr Savill's plan "serve as both a recognition and an appreciation of the important role that it plays. For this reason I should like to make it clear that due weight will be attached to this central aspect of the Tote's role during the review."

The Tote is the monopoly supplier of "pari-mutuel", or pool, horserace betting, with a presence both on course and in the high street. Established in 1926, it is a "body corporate" established by Parliament. It has no shareholders.

Yesterday the Tote reported record 1997/98 annual profits of £17.9 million, up 38 per cent, of which £10.2 million, up 17.5 per cent, will go to the industry.

Bankers celebrate European court ruling on VAT payments

BRITAIN'S tax authorities were last night bracing themselves for claims for tens of millions of pounds, following a landmark decision by the European Court of Justice, writes Mark Milner.

The court ruled that foreign exchange deals count as services as far as value added tax was concerned — opening the way for banks and other financial institutions to reclaim VAT payments incurred in carrying out foreign exchange business outside the European Union.

The decision comes after a challenge to the UK tax authorities by First National Bank of Chicago.

A revenue spokesman said

last night that it was difficult to quantify the tax that would have to be repaid but said "it is probably going to cost us less than £100 million".

City accountants welcomed the court decision — against which there is no appeal — arguing that it brought the UK into line with the EU.

As a result of the ruling "many banks and other financial institutions will be able to make retrospective claims for input tax recovery on a fair and reasonable basis," according to Peter Jenkins, a partner at Ernst & Young. "The overall payments by the Treasury will probably run into tens of millions of pounds."

UN opts for British firm BA in a spin over tail fins

David Cow
South African Editor

A "GREEN" British defence contractor has won a lucrative, exclusive contract to supply the United Nations with hundreds of mine-protected armoured vehicles for peace-keeping and humanitarian missions in war-torn areas.

The Trading Force, a private limited firm based in Fulham, west London, has secured an initial \$300 million (about £188 million), three-year deal to provide the UN with around 2,000 vehicles to convey troops and observers in areas such as Bosnia, the Middle East and Georgia.

The vehicles, built by a South African armaments manufacturer, Reumch, which makes tanks and howitzers, are constructed around a hardened capsule that protects the occupants from the effects of anti-personnel and land mine blast, as well as high-powered ballistic attack. They cost up to \$250,000 each, a quarter the price of a normal armoured personnel carrier.

Francis Le Carpentier, joint chief executive of the Trading Force, which he co-founded in 1988 and which is now a prime contractor to the UN, said last night: "We are taking fighting machines and turning them into peace-keeping vehicles. It's the green

side of the arms industry — we deal with nothing that causes harm to people."

He said the UN now had 11,000 vehicles for its peace-keeping and humanitarian missions but only 2,000 were armoured, few protected against devices such as land mines and many coming to the end of their lives.

"The vehicles we are supplying have been proven to offer protection against mines and to be much more stable and longer lasting," he added.

Mr Le Carpentier said the advantage of the Reumch vehicles, known as Mammas and Nyalas, is that they could operate in regions shattered by war yet appear to locals very like "normal" vehicles.

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

BRITISH AIRWAYS is to modify the controversial £20 million tail fin redesign on its aircraft after continual public protest since it introduced its new global colours more than a year ago, chief executive, Bob Ayling, said yesterday.

Mr Ayling revealed that BA had already decided to modify the designs when the issue was raised again at yesterday's annual meeting. One shareholder, Peter Watson, said they supported BA because it was British. But, he went on: "I don't honestly feel that this is reflected by the

new tail fin. It is a question of the pride of being British. The fin looks like a piece of plastic."

Mr Ayling agreed that the issue was important. "We want to maintain our British image but we also want to be a company which is global. More than 60 per cent of our customers come from abroad and they say that they like the global images on our tail fins."

He said that BA was still trying to find a solution. "We have no intention of getting rid of our three main colours, blue, red and white. They are very popular."

BA later revealed that some designs were being modified, including one which depicted

Chinese calligraphy. It admitted that some were too complicated.

Sir Colin Marshall, BA's chairman, backed Mr Ayling. He understood people's reservations about the new tail fin, he said, "but we are not trying to disguise or deny our British heritage — traditional British qualities allied to a modern, international outlook are our strengths."

Another shareholder questioned the chief executive on whether he was about to leave for a Government post, as some rumours had suggested. When Mr Ayling said that his intention was to remain with BA as long as he had the support of the board, Sir Colin quickly backed him.

Clampdown on mobile prices

Simon Evans
Media Business Editor

MOBILE phone companies were last night facing a prices clampdown from watchdog Ofcom along with another three months of grilling examination by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The new director-general of Ofcom, David Edmonds, is understood to be drawing up plans to force the companies to publish much clearer prices for their services so that consumers can easily compare offers from the rival operators — Vodafone, Cellnet, Orange and One2One.

The emergence of the new restrictions came as the MMC won agreement from Mr Edmonds to extend its current six-month inquiry into the high cost of mobile phone calls by a further three months, delaying any announcement until December.

Although the MMC inquiry is shaping up into one of the most extensive investigations of the mobile-phone industry in Britain, it is nevertheless focusing on the issue of how much it costs to call a mobile from a fixed line.

It is primarily aimed at market leaders Vodafone and Cellnet, which is 60 per cent owned by British Telecom.

Amid widespread complaints from consumers that they are being inundated with offers from the operators, Mr Edmonds is considering asking them to conform to common tariff structures.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.57	Germany 2.95	Malaysia 6.97	Singapore 2.74
Austria 20.20	Greece 475.48	Malta 0.62	South Africa 5.57
Belgium 20.25	Hong Kong 12.35	Netherlands 3.22	Spain 24.11
Canada 2.37	India 50.85	New Zealand 3.08	Sweden 12.95
Cyprus 0.84	Ireland 1.13	Norway 12.24	Switzerland 2.42
Denmark 11.01	Israel 6.01	Portugal 252.07	Turkey 425.00
Finland 8.17	Italy 2.50	Saudi Arabia 5.04	USA 1.25
France 9.51			

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shekel and pound)

Taxing for the arrivals

Stamps strike free-duck

Cricket

Tour match: Somerset v Sri Lanka XI

Taxing time for the new arrivals

David Hoppe at Taunton

SRI LANKA's tour of England began yesterday in suitably relaxed fashion, for none more so than their experienced and hugely influential captain Arjuna Ranatunga, whose pre-match calisthenics consisted of a brief and leisurely stroll around the outfield.

Ranatunga was taking things easy on medical advice after a cortisone injection in a shoulder injury and his only regret was that he had not talked Ranjith Fernando, the tour manager, into joining him.

With England confined in the middle of a South African series epitomised by discipline and efficiency, it is tempting to use this as an illustration of gentle times ahead. Tempting but untrue. Ranatunga, slimmer and fitter than he has been for years and marking on what he expects to be his last Test tour of England, has one remaining ambition: to win a Test at Lord's.

For England to have played only five Tests against Sri Lanka in 17 years is little short of an outrage. Ranatunga has had only three months' break since Sri Lanka won the World Cup more than two years ago and, along with several senior players, had toyed with arriving late, partly as a gesture of irritation at another single-Test tour.

Ranatunga's stand-in as captain, Sanath Jayasuriya, had a taxing day. Sri Lanka's most penetrative fast bowlers, Nuwan Zoysa and Chaminda Vaas, are absent (although Vaas may make a surprise appearance later in the tour) and Muthiah Muralitharan, the world's leading off-spinner, was not selected here.

Somerset grasped the opportunity on a reliable pitch, declaring at 366 for six the moment Keith Parsons, an

uncapped 25-year-old batsman, had completed his second first-class century.

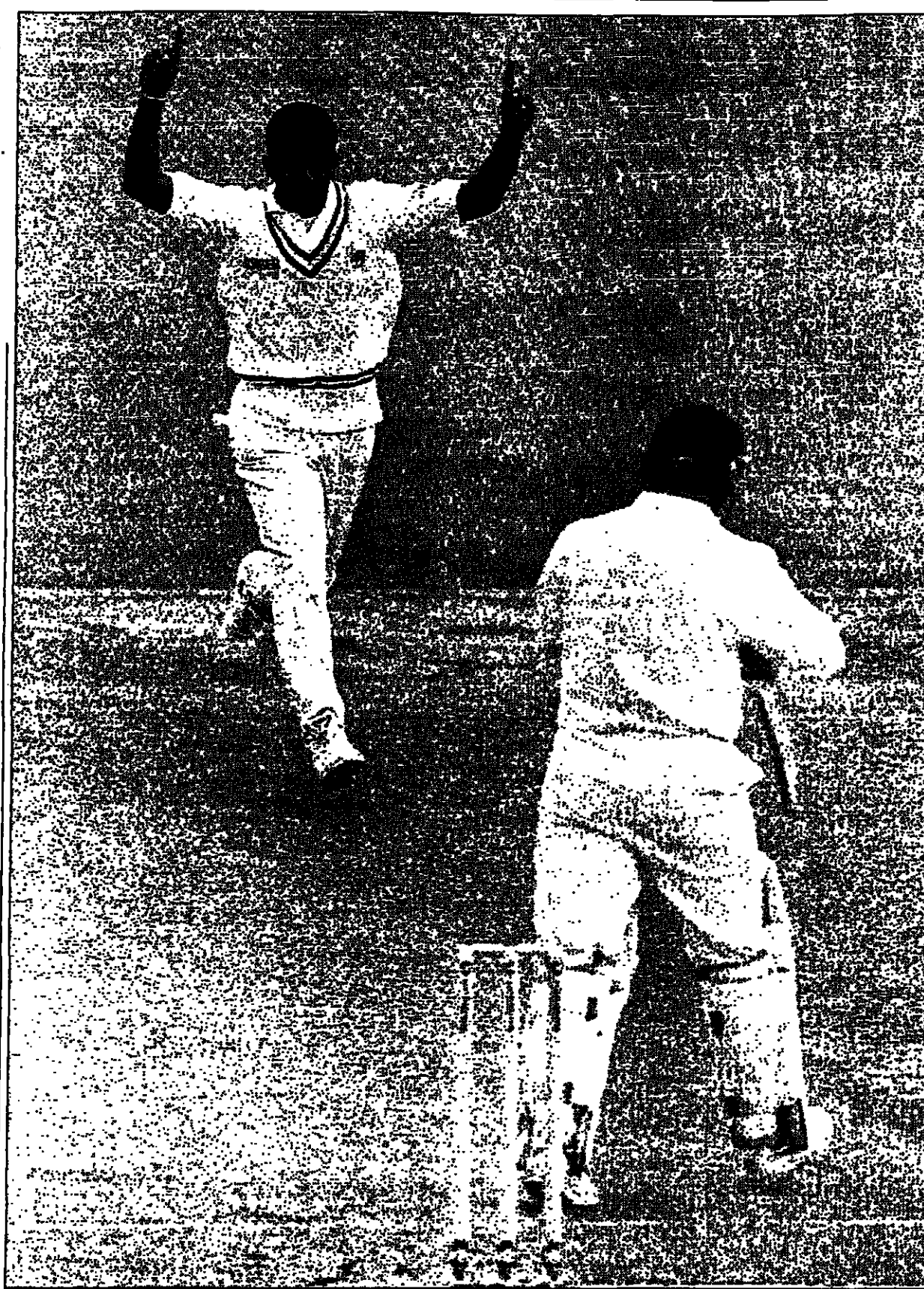
Sri Lanka, left with five overs to bat, closed on eight for two, with Jayasuriya lucklessly dismissed for nought in the first over when he glanced Matt Bullock's fourth ball and was adjudged to have trod on his stumps. He trudged off in the firm belief that the ball had been dislodged by the wind.

That Sri Lanka were not further embarrassed in the field owed much to Pramodya Wickramasinghe, who finished with four wickets. He began stiffly as if howling in a butchers' deep freeze, which in some ways, after the 30 degree heat of Colombo, he was. His pace picked up during several admirably persistent spells later, although by the time Parsons drove him through extra cover for his hundred he was merely relieved not to have to chase it himself.

Had the Sri Lankans pursued a recent restaurant review on the flight over, they might have expected to be pitted against "two-headed sheep-shaggers on combine harvesters", an assessment of Taunton life which has left residents, and the local MP, seeking retribution.

Instead, the batting harvest was gathered in by a combination that had once given England food for thought, as Marcus Trescothick and Mark Lathwell shared a second-wicket stand of 118.

Gerhardus Liebenberg added to South Africa's injury worries in the lead-up to next week's fourth Test when he was hit on a finger by Durham's Melvyn Betts yesterday. The opener retired hurt but returned after having X-rays as South Africa declared on 562 for three on the opening day. Shaun Pollock withdrew with hamstring trouble and Jacques Kallis, Lance Klusener and Adam Bacher are receiving treatment.



Struck out... Wickramasinghe takes a rare wicket — that of Somerset's Richard Harden — on the tour's first day

County Championship Gloucestershire v Sussex

Adams strikes three-duck jinx

David Foot at Cheltenham

GLoucestershire have seldom had a more bony ally than Cheltenham, where the tents are plentiful, the accents nice and the Gothic chapel a timelessly mellow witness.

Yesterday they finished on 94 for three having bowled out Sussex for 191 by tea time. Tim Hancock is 60 not out, full of bold strokes, reminding us fleetingly of Zaheer Abbas who scored 265 and 106 in a match here, also against Sussex, 21 years ago.

There were 10 fours in his 50 and it was looking increasingly like one of his best innings for the county. Mark Alleyne, at a ground where he rarely fails, seemed in a hurry and was taken in the slips at the end.

Sussex needed no more than a glance at the apparently golden track before choosing to bat, a logical decision which by the sixth over sparked apprehension as Toby Pearce, shaping to glance, pulled on to Mike Smith.

Soon after Mark Newell had also gone to Smith and Chris Adams to Jon Lewis, and the apparent mysteries of the pitch were beginning to take on, at least in the Sussex dressing room, the aura of a Ronaldo late-appearance. It was especially perplexing

for Adams. Last summer, when with Derby, he was out twice without scoring on this ground; yesterday's was his second in a row. Old superstitions die hard here and the locals may suggest he would do well to glance deferentially in the direction of the famed Devil's Chimney landmark before his next innings.

Sussex, in fact, failed more because of technical weaknesses. Courtney Walsh was less effective than usual in his first spell but still took three wickets, including that of Wasim Khan, who anchored the innings sensibly for 24 hours.

Khan hit nine boundaries and so did Michael Bevan. There was not much more batting of note — apart from Robin Martin-Jenkins' resistance — from a county which has brushed off the jinx of last year and climbed to third in the table. Lewis had Bevan caught behind and immediately knocked back Shaun Humphries off stump. A hat-trick slipped by as Martin-Jenkins snickered perilously near second slip.

Meanwhile, Jack Russell embroidered his record by holding Neil Taylor for his 700th first-class catch for Gloucestershire. He overhauled Jack Board, the Gloucestershire, and WG's favourite in the process, and now only Barrie Meyer is marginally ahead of him.

Lancashire v Worcestershire

Hick's the name in the frame for England but Flintoff steals the show

Andy Wilson at Lytham St Anne's

WRITING off Graeme Hick as a Test cricket first in a row of England failure. There were two talented candidates on show here.

First the local lad Flintoff, who added the scalps of Tom Moody and David Leatherdale to Hick's, doubling his previous tally of first-class victims and proving his recovery from a back injury which has limited his bowling over the past three years.

David Lloyd recalls Flintoff forcing Hogg to stand further back than he did for Warrington during his first-class debut in 1995. The previous winter he had been called up as a batting replacement for an England side, which he had not played for since 1997, having topped the bowling averages.

Vikram Solanki, Indian-born but Wolverhampton-bred, was a team-mate on

that tour, so Flintoff was doubly disappointed when he deceived Solanki with a slower ball, only for Wasim to drop a chance at extra cover. Solanki had edged his first ball just short of Mike Atherton at first slip, and was dropped for a second time at third slip on 61. But the rest of his 87 was a wristy delight, with 15 boundaries spread all around the wicket.

His partnership of 79 with Steve Rhodes, followed by 40 between Rhodes and Stuart Lampitt, let Worcestershire recover from 143 for five to 261 for seven, already a handy total on a difficult pitch.

Lancashire did only themselves to blame. In addition to Solanki's let-offs, they missed three more chances and conceded more than 40 runs in overthrows. And the wickets and byes. There were 10 of the latter, but that was down to erratic bowling and umpiring, and no reflection on Hogg, who defied thumb injury to take five catches.

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Test recall... Hick is set to come in for injured Thorpe

Scoreboard

Britannic Assurance County Championship

GLoucestershire v SUSSEX

Cheltenham 94 (30 overs) (40) trail Sussex 191 by 97 runs with seven first-innings wickets remaining.

Sussex: M T Pearce b Smith 6; M Newell b Smith 10; C J Adams b Lewis 40; G Gordon b Russell 40; N R Taylor b Russell b Smith 6; R S Martin-Jenkins c Windows 40; R Humphries b Lewis 40; R J Killey b Walsh 10; J D Lewis c Russell b Smith 6; M A Robinson not out 0; Extras (10, 10, 10, 10) 40.

Total (for 3, 31 overs) 191

To bats: M T Pearce, M Newell, C J Adams, G Gordon, N R Taylor, R S Martin-Jenkins, R Humphries, R J Killey, J D Lewis, M A Robinson.

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Lancashire v WORCESTERSHIRE

Lytham 261 (30 overs) (40) trail Worcestershire 143 by 118 runs with seven first-innings wickets remaining.

Worcestershire: M T Pearce b Smith 6; M Newell b Smith 10; C J Adams b Lewis 40; G Gordon b Russell 40; N R Taylor b Russell b Smith 6; R S Martin-Jenkins c Windows 40; R Humphries b Lewis 40; R J Killey b Walsh 10; J D Lewis c Russell b Smith 6; M A Robinson not out 0; Extras (10, 10, 10, 10) 40.

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SOMERSET v SRI LANKA XI

Taunton 366 (30 overs) (40) trail Sri Lanka XI 8 for two with five first-innings wickets remaining.

Sri Lanka XI: M T Pearce b Smith 6; M Newell b Smith 10; C J Adams b Lewis 40; G Gordon b Russell 40; N R Taylor b Russell b Smith 6; R S Martin-Jenkins c Windows 40; R Humphries b Lewis 40; R J Killey b Walsh 10; J D Lewis c Russell b Smith 6; M A Robinson not out 0; Extras (10, 10, 10, 10) 40.

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SPORTS NEWS 13

This is the summer of our discontent



FOR English cricket, these are the desperate hours. Competing with the World Cup was bound to be difficult. But it has turned out far worse than anyone foresaw.

The summer weather has been the worst of the decade. No one wants to buy overpriced tickets in advance in such a year, and no one wants to roll up on the day either. The Benson and Hedges final was a flop even before it was a washout.

The touring team, though highly efficient, are uncharismatic and dreary; it was a terrible — as well as unjust — decision to give the South African five Tests and the Sri Lankans only one.

The England team, of course, are inefficient as well as uncharismatic. And public impatience is such that even a classic Drunkard's evacuation like the one conducted at Old Trafford, now evokes derision rather than enthusiasm.

Fifteen years ago, when football lost its way, it was possible to imagine a future in which all kinds of sports would flourish. Now the national winter game is also the national summer game.

The sporting landscape has become a monoculture: an arid East Anglian prairie with football fields stretching to the horizon. Like the lawping and the blue tit, cricket is in danger of starving to death. And it is certainly not the only endangered species. Apparently, rugby league is also played in the summer these days. This is a very well-kept secret.

The quality of argument in this crisis is on a par with the standard of cricket. There are two main variations:

1. Lord MacLaurin, the chairman of the England Cricket Board, is a successful businessman; he used to run Tesco; therefore all those in cricket who do not do what he says are low-grade idiots.

2. It is obvious that splitting the County Championship into two divisions is the solution to the game's ills; all those who disagree are low-grade, parochial, idiots.

But intractable problems are not solved merely because the potential problem-solvers have a track record, or look and sound good (observe Tony Blair).

MacLaurin, in 18 months in

charge, has presided over a massive increase in the Lord's bureaucracy; one FR disaster involving the bureaucracy — The Case of the Pregnant Receptionist; and one triumph — the Government decision to allow Test cricket to go to minority TV channels which may pay more money.

MacLaurin regards this as a triumph, anyway. Otherwise, things are much as they ever were.

Now he is turning his attention back to the unfinished business of reforming the County Championship. In this area MacLaurin has had problems working out what he does want. He appears now to have settled on two divisions. And the Mail on Sunday this week claimed that most counties now agreed.

THE paper, however, may have misread its own poll. Three counties who previously opposed reform — Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Somerset — said they would switch sides if they had a defence and a credible business plan. No such plan exists, and the ECB says it cannot exist until a TV deal is signed and the game's finances secured.

Despite years of waffle, not one of the ECB's army of employees appears to have sat down and analysed the likely effects of change.

My judgment is that there will be short-term benefits, but increasing long-term disadvantages.

It is all pretty meaningless anyway. People try to equate county cricket to the Premiership. It's nothing of the kind. You can't imagine Arsenal being without half their team half the time, as happens to Surrey Test cricket. It is on a similar scale to the Premiership; and that's the right analogy. County cricket is more like the lower divisions. What matters is how well it feeds talent into the international game.

The current answer, as far as England are concerned, is dreadfully real change will come if (a) cricket becomes more popular among children, especially those in the cities; (b) it is made a more glittering career option for talented sportsmen by vastly increasing the rewards for success; and (c) it is made less comfortable for time-servers — the real-life Podmores — which would be achieved by the abolition of the vile system of benefits.

Simply reforming the County Championship is not just like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic before the iceberg hits. It is like sending divers down now to do the job on the seabed.

Back-to-back start to Tests on Ashes tour next winter

ENGLAND will play back-to-back Tests against Australia, after four warm-up matches, on their Ashes tour next winter.

The Test series will open at the Gabba in Brisbane on November 20, then England will take the five-hour flight to Perth to play the second Test at the WACA ground starting on November 28.

South Australia have been confirmed as their third tour opponents, in Adelaide from November 7-10, and they will also face Victoria in Melbourne from December

Racing

Home Secretary's review plan hints at broader partnership with private sector for the Tote. Chris Hawkins reports

Off-course market the target for Jones

PETER JONES, chairman of the Tote, has been appointed to look at the future of the Horserace Totalisator Board and its possible privatisation.

The wording used by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, when announcing the appointment at yesterday's Tote annual general meeting, was that the inquiry would "look at the broader partnership with the Tote and the private sector".

"This is not a matter of moving straight to privatisation," said Straw. "That will clearly be one possible option, but the tripartite exercise involving the Tote, the Treasury and Home Office will

look at a range of possibilities and nothing is ruled out at this stage."

It is very much in racing's interests that Jones will be in charge and have a major input into the findings of the review body which is expected to report by the end of the year.

Jones, a self-made millionaire and not the sort of man to be easily brow-beaten, has racing at heart and will undoubtedly resist any outright privatisation of an organisation whose profits at the moment go straight back into the game.

Those profits last year, he announced, amounted to a record £17.9 million with racing receiving £10.2 million, an in-

crease of 17.5 per cent on the previous year.

All divisions of the Tote are profitable - racecourse pool betting, credit betting, Tote bookmakers and Tote Direct - but the off-course market accounts for 90 per cent of racing's turnover.

"We have only five per cent of the off-course trade and in consequence our main thrust in future will be to build up that side of the Tote's business," said Jones.

"We are in the market for more betting shops, and if the Monopolies and Mergers Commission find against Ladbrokes in their takeover of Coral, we would hope to be in the battle for the 800 or so shops that would become

available." The Tote bought 133 Ladbrokes shops at the beginning of the year for £46.5 million, but to be in the market for another 800 would involve a huge investment which is where the partnership with the private sector might come in.

Following the Jockey Club's report into the three fatalities in last season's Grand National, Alstree racecourse has announced new safety measures, the main one being that the first fence will be widened by two metres to give horses more room.

Another 80 groundstaff will also be employed specifically to repair the Grand National course on the Friday

following the Foxhunters' Chase. The report, compiled after consultation with the RSPCA and the International League for the Protection of Horses, concluded that "there was no single factor or evident combination of factors common to the accidents."

Hitman, one of the most impressive handicap winners of the season when successful at Newmarket last week, will step up to Group company in the Gordon Stakes at Goodwood on July 28, the first of five glorious days at the Sussex race culminating with the Stewards' Cup on the Saturday.

Royston French will miss the first three days of Goodwood after being suspended

for seven days (starting July 23) by the Brighton stewards, who found him guilty of riding an ill-judged race on 2-8 chance Splendid Isolation, beaten a short-head by Robin Splendour in the Brighton Rock Stakes yesterday.

French appeared to give the favourite, who finished last, far too much to do.

Other jockeys in trouble yesterday were Darren Moffatt and Kevin Darley. Moffatt got an eight-day ban after striking fellow rider Dean Mernagh with the whip in the Collecting Ring Apprentices Handicap at Beverley, while Darley was banned for three days for careless riding aboard Sealed By Fate in the GRAY Stakes Handicap.

Sandown tonight

RON COX	TOP FORM
5.25 Drap Space (imp)	Class 4
5.55 Lament	Class 4
6.25 Lament	Class 4
6.55 Lament	Class 4
7.25 Lament	Class 4
7.55 Lament	Class 4
8.25 Lament	Class 4
8.55 Lament	Class 4

Right-handed, testing course of 1m5f with 405 run-in. Straight 5f which is uphill throughout.

Going: Good. + Denotes blinkers. Draw: High numbers favoured over 5f.

Seven day winners: None. Blundered first time: 8.25 Pood Absorb, Ardent, Viscount. None. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. Jumps.

6.25 EDMOND PETT HANDICAP	5f 23.404 (11 declared)
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Faldo out of rough to give the elbow to soft options

At the second hole he hit a drive down the middle and then teed the ball up. Someone in the crowd shouted out

more tournaments in the past nine months than anyone else in the world, including Tiger Woods and David Duval. In that time he has won in Spain,



PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN LAMARQUE

"It's like any sport," Westwood said yesterday. "Once you start getting a few good

of hard work with my coach, Peter Cowen, and hopefully it was going to pay off at some

and getting drunk on Friday night with the lads, it's not a lot to sacrifice, is it, and you

improvement in my game, David Duval's game, Justin Leonard's game, Ernie Els's game.

bound to occur this week the ability to forget them will be invaluable.

but it's not life and death. It's only a game at the end of the day."

The master puts his trust in new woods

So it will come as no surprise to find that, should his dicky elbow permit him to tee up in tomorrow's first round, he will do so having decided to switch club manufacturers once more. Not to one of the

It was a design minutes which i

sketched in 20 intrigued Faldo

chance to associate with someone whose status from a technical standpoint is almost unparalleled today and whose emphasis on quality goes without saying. Although he has been playing some terrible stuff he is, I be-



A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a man in mid-swing, wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants, holding a golf club. The image is grainy and has a high-contrast, almost stencil-like quality. The man is captured in a dynamic pose, with his body twisted and his arms extended, holding a golf club. The background is a mottled, textured grey. The overall effect is dramatic and emphasizes the form and motion of the golfer.

Injury time. . . Faldo tests his elbow yesterday NICK HEMITT

- 1 Expose as fake (say) note enclosed in sausage meat (6,3)
- 6 Servant of power (4)
- 10 Cold rhubarbs (5)
- 11 Should he worry about love in the home? (8)
- 12 Breathe regret for amphibians in non-nuclear bodies (7)
- 13 Skinny fellow with warmer coat? (7)
- 14 Millionaires of a different humour from 3? (8,4)
- 17 Stage work — one of Shakespeare's after death of 6 or 26? (3,5,9)
- 21 Commercial line? On the contrary (7)
- 22 He is loving and giving, which makes one nuclear (7)
- 24 — most of the following day a number are looking gloomy (9)

26 Passage with model (4)
27 American disagreement with Brazil is only too well known (9)
Down
1 New York city heard Your Majesty charge (8)
2 Clear round reaching the green (5)
3 Percy's beheaded with 25 and 26 — characters from Shakespeare play (6,2,5)
4 Where there's a letter to man — British — from St Paul? (7)
5 Non-U spiritual leader to levitate in an abrupt manner (7)
6 Dish has boiled — it's done (9)
7 Put the last river last (6)
8 Nurture by look at newspaper for frequent conversation (6,4,3)

16 Sign it (3)
20 Liza from 1 down and 4 in the 3 (4, 4)
18 Winds in East (5)? (7)
19 Think what 9 does to following cars (7)
20 Range of service provided (5)
23 Derogatory name for Pole with pulpfit (5)

Solution tomorrow

23 Guess? Then call our solutions line on 0800 338 238. Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Service supplied by ATB

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING
Recycled paper made up of 40% of the new material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1987

ANALYST

perament, which may explain why Lee Westwood has won almost £1 million in the past nine months and is now being considered the professional circuit in 1980 because he could barely make enough to pay the mortgage.

When not swinging like an angel, Westwood generally behaves like one. Cowen, by contrast, was a well-known character. "His head came off" is how the locker-room sages describe such antics, and when the 47-year-old Yorkshireman was on the circuit the head was off more times than on an average day in revolutionary Paris.

"He was a real loose breed, he came in one round," he grimaces. "Then there was

There is not an amateur golfer in the land who does not know the end of that story: the price of the fancub. Unfortunately for Cowen his bad temper hastened the end of a respectable career on the European Tour — he finished 54th in the 1980 Order of Merit — and he became a club pro, teaching high-handicap players the essentials of getting off the tee.

Eighteen years later he is one of the most sought-after teaching pros in the game, with a rota of pupils that includes Darren Clarke and David Howell, British go to the next star of tropical golf. Cowen's teaching is the envy of Westwood which has made Cowen's reputation.

Cowen for half a dozen seasons when he was a junior but had turned to another teacher. He had an impressive amateur record and was the European Tour Rookie of the Year in 1994, but his form dipped in his second year as a professional and in the next he made only 27,000 from 11 tournaments. "When he came to see me his game was short and wild," recalls Cowen.

Beauty and the beast got to work, and the rest is a golfing fairy story. Now Westwood's game is very long and very straight. "I restored his fundamentals to his game, the things he's good at when he was young, and he's become a player who could always

Fortunately Westwood did not need any lessons from Cowen on how to keep his temper. "Unlike me he has never been one for shouting and swearing at them at the bag, I couldn't stop myself, even in practice rounds, and the one guarantee I can give you is that, no matter how good a swing you have, a bad temperament will ruin that swing," says Cowen ruefully.

It is a little surprising that a man who has been so thoughtful that he thought if I practised a lot I would never hit a bad shot when it came to the tournament. Lee understands that he is never going to hit a perfect shot every time."

So what is Cowen's secret formula for world-class golf? "It's simple," he says. "Plant your ass, walk

worked hard on the things Peter told me to work on," he says with a grin. "And now I've reached this level, I feel it might be time to change coach again."

How to change? Cowen shouts back. Does that mean you want to change back to being a professional golfer again?

David Inglis, 16, won the Junior Open at Formby yesterday. The pins-one handi-
capper from Rosslyn, near Edinburgh, improved by six strokes in his opening 77 to finish on the money at Camillo Village from Coloma, Calif., via Briggs, one of nine pins-taking part, shot 68-80; Tom Watson's 15-year-old son Michael scored 96-77 and Greg Norman's 12-year-old

100

100-103.